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FUN-AND-PATHOS
OF - ONE - LIFE
JAMES - T - DuBOIS



===== GIFT OF =====

Miss Alice N. Hays

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With the best-wishes of
James T. Durbin
Oct 3-1912

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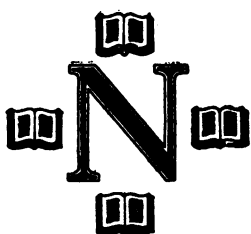
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FUN AND PATHOS
OF
ONE LIFE



FUN AND PATHOS OF ONE LIFE

BY
JAMES T. DuBOIS
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FOREWORD

The existence of man from birth to death is a series of encounters. To preserve in type some of the incidents that have come into the life of one person, "Fun and Pathos of One Life" has been written. If they should create a single smile or awaken one kind thought in the lives of men the author will have been well paid for the hours spent on the little volume. The contents are not wholly original, but quite as original as are most human things, for under the sun there is nothing new. The booklet was written for pastime and is respectfully dedicated to all who buy it and pay the regular price. For the disappointed reader there will be plenty of sympathy, but no rebate.

THE AUTHOR.

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PRELUDE

JACK STANLEY belonged to that type of men who come into the world, pass through it—and make an exit—without creating commotion; but who get all that belong to them of fun and pathos; and human life is after all simply fun and pathos.

He was born of poor and honest parents; not “poor *but* honest,” as the thoughtless are prone to say, thus reflecting upon the poor as if it were unusual to be poor and honest at the same time. His father was a good man, and a frank one, for in his will he said laconically, “To my son Jack I bequeath a strong frame and a true heart, together with as much of the earth as he can occupy by his own efforts.” Jack accepted the legacy in the spirit of a worthy son, knowing his father would have left him two thousand a year in the concrete, rather than a section of the earth in the abstract, if it had been in his power. Thus he went forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and without reproach. He found that part of the earth his father had tentatively be-

queathed to him not a bad place to live in, and while some conditions did not meet his views, he was consoled by the thought that he did not create them and could not be held responsible for their existence.

As his father was about to cross the great dead sea, he remarked that his family would not find creditors dangling their heels from the porch of their humble home, and he made good his word. There were no debts, but there was also no income, and while one was a relief the other was the source of anxiety; but it did not ruffle the appreciation Jack had of the real worth of his father. He was not the sort of boy who in childhood thinks his father knows more than God, in his teens believes he knows more than his father, at twenty feels his father would be fortunate if he knew half as much as he does, at twenty-five wonders why his father does not come to him for advice, at thirty again thinks his father knows something, at forty comes to his father for advice, and when his father is dead, firmly believes him to have been the smartest man that ever lived. He had always sought his father's counsel and desired his companionship, and in return his father showed him that paternal interest which pervades all

homes where fathers with red blood in their veins maintain a sound friendship with their sons. To this happy condition a worthy mother added the blessings of her sweet and wholesome life. His father taught him to do nothing but what was defensible, while his mother impressed him with the fact that the descent into hell is easy, but to climb back again is difficult, and both urged him not to wait for opportunity, as that killed time, but to hunt for it, as that meant success, and also to get all the good possible out of this life, and hope for all that is good in the next. With these admonitions Jack passed into young manhood, and they helped him over many a bog and fen in the journey of life.

It has been written that every thoughtful man in his passage through the world takes a pencil with him, and, unperceived, marks on every person, or thing, the figure expressive of its value; and whenever that person or thing is met again he knows exactly what kind and degree of attention to give to it. This is applying experience to practical use, and Jack, courting experience, remembered her teachings from day to day, and acquired a store of knowledge for which he found ample need. Experience taught him that you cannot antidote a poison when it

gets well into the blood, so that prevention is worth a whole pharmacopœia in both a moral and a physical sense; that one vice begets another as naturally as eggs beget chicks; that young men are exposed to danger when they are the least prepared to defend; and that everybody knows more than anybody, for which reason all minds should be open to advice.

As you go on in life, said the Teacher Experience, you will find men ready to divide the full measure of your joys, but they will leave you alone with your woes. They will sup your wine, but they will let you drink the cup of gall. No one makes both ends meet who "spends much time in making one end drink," and he who tries to submerge his troubles in "the flowing bowl" will find them irrepressible mermaids. As you grow older, and elbow the world, it will be made plain that if a young man would abhor deceit, duplicity, and policy, and esteem people, not because of their wealth, or political and social success, but for their character and virtues, it would dispel the love for superficial life which is one of the potent evils that plague mankind.

Nothing is as perfect possessed as remembered, or anticipated, and as one grows old

he lives largely upon memories. Therefore, said the Teacher, it is wise to lay up a good store of pleasant ones for the sunset time of life. In this respect Nature is kind to man. As he advances in years he forgets the evil and remembers the good. Even with the Devil there is some virtue, continued the Teacher, as among thieves there is some honor, while under the cloak of piety, at times, skulks the great white skeleton of wrong. The planet might as well tug against the sun, or Niagara resolve not to fall, as to hope for the perfect anywhere, although some men who marry twice always claim their first wives were perfect.

In her ministrations the Teacher, Experience, was sometimes harsh, but Jack received eagerly all that was taught. He learned that you may gild a lie or a wrong with bright excuses, but it can never change the true character of the thing said or done. He learned that it is an important part of a boy's education if, without being a plodder, he could plod when necessary, and, without being a machine, he could master details, and retain the best he sees, reads, and hears. He learned that no thralldom equals that in which a man's sole thought is based on what the world may say or think. Do what is

right and defy the world. He learned that freedom is dangerous to all save the wise and noble, that no man is robbed of his liberty who is "deprived of the liberty of doing wrong," and that you cannot fool men all the time any more than you can fool Nature once. If you sow weeds you cannot harvest grain. He learned that if you aim at nothing you will never hit anything worth having; if you worry about the future you borrow trouble; if you moan over the past you waste your time and yourself, but if you seize the present and make the most of it, you make for success, because the movement of life is forward and upward, and the "eternal step of progress beats to that great anthem, calm and clear, which the Master ever and forever repeats." He learned that life is a complaint, and a very contagious one, and for its evils there is no certain remedy except death; but if you treat the disease with the best palliatives you may be comfortable, and these palliatives are industry, economy, temperance, patience, justice, cleanliness, and godliness. These, blended with a desire to make the world better, and make others happier, are the best palliatives, because giving happiness to others keeps alive the chance of being happy yourself.

The Teacher taught him that good luck comes to the meanest as well as the best; and, to some of the downright mean, it comes like the dew at night, gently as the sunbeams move to life the budding trees. As for the dead we have wronged, no matter how deep our remorse, they cannot pardon us, because they cannot hear our appeals, therefore always do a kindness straightway while the fateful future is not here, for time is always on the wing. He stands by the dial of the universe, and as the minutes are ticked off "he gives to those who grasp them; but left unclaimed, they pass unused, unfruitful, unyielding into the night of the unreturning past."

In the never ceasing, but always changing struggle of man, said the Teacher, "some hands fold where others are lifted bravely in the strife, and thus through all lands and through all ages move on the two extremes." In the wild race for competence, thrift combined with industry make the safest team, and the bird that seeks the worm after nine in the morning flies on an empty stomach till eventide. The spirit which impels the miser to hoard his gold is contemptible, but to consider when you spend five cents that it is five per cent. of one dollar is commendable,

because that makes for economy, which is a virtue this nation most needs, and which it must acquire, or pay the penalty in beggary and want. He learned that some men are forced into honesty because no man will trust them, and that both sexes sit up nights inventing schemes to exist without work. If such creatures exchange checks with you as an accommodation to them and their checks are made payable next week, that week never comes. They do not remember borrowing money of you longer than it takes to spend it, and when the debt is outlawed it is to them a matter for self-congratulation. He learned that a few paltry dollars will change some men's "no" into a "yes" as quick as you can pass the money, and that many men and women are "doing" the social act whose principle it is not to pay interest because it is to their interest not to pay principal. Such people are straightaway scoundrels who have never been able to draw from their veins the black spot inherited from an ancestry of deadbeats, and yet the influence of these vicious lives is not much worse than evils resulting from amiable motives which have strewn the earth with social, religious, and financial wrecks, and the highways of hell with broken hopes.

It is said that against the stupid the gods fight in vain; another friend, another trouble; a foe will slander you and a friend will hurry the news to your ears. With these and a myriad of other evils, man must contend from birthday to deathday, and yet Jack learned that none of them cut quite so deep nor grieve quite so much as human ingratitude. Gratitude signifies sensibility, generosity, and a feeling of obligation, but it is a virtue more conspicuous for its absence than any of the good qualities the human race ought to possess. Even a common yellow cur has more gratitude in a heart-beat than some men show in a life-time. Debts of gratitude, as a rule, are worth less than five cents on the dollar, and even this amount is hard to collect. In the life of one kind-hearted and self-sacrificing man it occurred that of one hundred and twenty-seven persons to whom he had rendered valuable assistance in times of need only three showed genuine appreciation, while of forty persons who borrowed money of him only six returned the loans, and this, all lenders will agree, was a record-breaking average. Of the remaining thirty-four, five remained on speaking terms with him; but of these, three preferred to use the telephone.

Nothing is more certainly written in the book of human experience than that the lives of most men differ from their words; and this is so true that no one should consider every man innocent until he is proven guilty—as the law does; that is, he should remember that few men are what they seem.

The truth of all this came to Jack Stanley in many ways on his journey to manhood, and a few of the varied experiences which he gleaned from the Master Teacher are recorded in "Fun and Pathos of One Life."

BUYERS VERSUS BIBLES

Boys, as a rule, develop slowly. The metal in them does not show until they have passed through the smelter of practical experience, and you cannot tell much about them until they get busy with the serious things of life. Big boy bullies are impressive in their way, but they sometimes get soundly punished by quiet little fellows who do not want to fight. A quarter of a century was required to convince the mother of Bismarck that in producing him she had not produced a goose, but the name of the Man of Blood and Iron will be uttered with admiration by millions still unborn. Precocious youths often go to seed before they are fully grown, while boys who plod along in study and in work, using well the time allotted for their tasks, sometimes surprise the world with acts of sterling worth and win a wide renown.

Jack Stanley had drifted contentedly on the placid waters of home life. He loved home and all of its surroundings. His father taught him that when a person scorns the place of his birth the first question is, "What mean thing has he done there?" From

childhood he had learned to honor and respect the ancient refuge of his race. His love for the place of his nativity was like that of the prairie farmer who, while looking at the towering Sierras, was asked, "Can anything beat that?" "Yes," he replied, "them things that wears skirts at home." Jack had never gone out into the world to knock at its closed doors, and be jolted on its crowded thoroughfares, and feel the sting of its greedy life. Sheltered in the arms of a friendly community he did not know that outside of that circle was a heartless realm in which the golden rule is seldom used in measuring up a stranger, but where in doing things they try to "do" the stranger first.

When Jack reached the age where the question of an education must be considered he was without means, and he began to plan how he could earn the necessary funds. While searching for work he was offered an agency for the sale of illustrated Bibles. He accepted, and sought subscribers in his native town. The scheme worked like a well-adjusted machine. Everybody he knew seemed to need a Bible. His relatives bought to encourage him, his friends bought to show their good will. He unloaded the Holy Word onto his relatives first, then he resorted to his

friends, and finally to his mere acquaintances. One old lady, who had been his grandfather's sweetheart sixty years before, gave him a ten-dollar gold piece for a nine-dollar Bible and told him to keep the change; a man who had been a Forty-niner with his uncle took two Bibles to help the nephew along, gave one away and used the other long enough to look at the pictures; the old midwife who assisted him into the world bought one to help him through it; a maiden lady who loved his father, before his mother cut her out, took one for Auld Lang Syne; the family washerwoman, who could not read, but who had just received a big back pension, took one, and when asked, some weeks after, how she liked it, replied, "Well, it ends like all the rest of them books. They git married at last."

In short, he passed from success to triumph as easy as water finds its level. His Bibles were in great demand. So rapid were the sales he imagined he could hear the presses of the Bible concern humming to fill his orders. He stopped shipment by freight and expressed the Holy Word to meet the demands. Everything went his way and he saw wealth and independence in the near future.

It has been said that in the minds of some men who make quick success self looms up largest and they contemplate self alone; others think as far as their families; others concern themselves with communities; few think in terms of nations; very few, like Bismarck, Hay, and Root, think in continents, while God alone thinks in universes.

The success Jack Stanley achieved in selling Bibles among his friends caused his personality to loom up the largest thing on his own mental horizon, and he became eager for a field of larger range. He magnified his capacity for selling Bibles, and would brook no delay in seeking a broader sphere of operation. "Delays," he said, "are dangerous, and procrastination has a mortal enemy and it is hours." How little he comprehended the meaning of delay. How maligned and misunderstood is that word in its relation to the lives of men. "No gentler hand is used to soften death's unkindly blow. It halts the grim messenger on its way. To shame's swift commissioner it says pause a little with thy weight of woe. It bids passion stay like a stern highwayman when joys overflow. It robs the lover's pulse of heat, and even heaven might seem less fair if we could hurry to it when we would, for things hoped

for are often sweeter than things possessed."

But Jack Stanley, inspired by easy success among his friends, would tolerate no delay. Like most men he thought any place other than the one he was in was the best place. He imagined the triumphs that had come to him at home would come as sure in wider and stranger fields. Having sold Bibles with ease to those who knew and sympathized with him, he believed he could sell Bibles even to those who made them if he had the chance. With this thought he went forth to meet strange faces in a strange land, taking with him a stout heart, one sample Bible and a blank subscription book.

No one is wise at all times. Even Jove could not be discreet and love in the same hour. In Jack's thoughts of easy conquest amid alien surroundings he gravely misjudged mankind. He did not know that the community into which he went, unaccredited and unknown, was aiding book agents out of town when they desired to stay, a fact that was rudely disclosed as he paused to ring the bell at the first house where he hoped to sell the Holy Word. The door opened and a voice cried:

"What yer want?"

"I have here," began Jack, "a fifteen dollar Bible for——"

"We've got Bibles enough in this house to burn a wet dog with!" shouted the man as he slammed the door shut with a jar that awoke in the young agent thoughts that were new.

He had started out to make a hurricane canvass of the town. Now he knew that a cyclone cellar was what was needed. He had learned from Experience that only one thing can be well done at a time, and the one thing to do is that which is most urgent. Accordingly, he moved on to the next house. As he entered the front yard he saw a sign which evidently intended that he who reads might run. It read:

"No buk agents need appli, nor no litenin rod sellers nuther."

Certain kinds of pain, the sort that avert greater pain, are to be endured, and to accept this warning was wiser than to face a danger that was ready to meet him at the door, so he once more moved on. As he approached the next house he saw on the door step, untied and restless, a burly dog with a passion that seemed to call for restraint. The dog's presence made Jack poorer by one hope, but richer by one ex-

perience, and he backed off and bolted away, remembering what happened to a book agent who called at the farmhouse of an old German.

Just as the agent rapped at the front door a massive bull-terrier paid him a visit from the back yard, greeting him, as he plunged through the gateway, by removing a part of the bosom of his trousers. While defending himself and measuring off yards of robust words, the window opened and the head of an old German woman popped out.

"Mein freund," said she, "did dose dogs bide you?"

"No," said the agent, "he didn't exactly bite me, but he left me no seat to sit on."

"Vell, mein freund," cried the old woman, "you mus' accuse dose dogs ef he didn't bide you; dose dogs is young now, but you wait a leedle bit und come around bye and bye ven dose dogs gits older, und he vill bide der bones right out of a book agent."

At the next house the coast seemed clear. Jack rapped hopefully. A little male thing in bare feet, looking altogether too solemn for his size, appeared in the doorway. His legs were bowed and abbreviated, his stomach was evidently the chief metropolis of his system, and while he was not as handsome as

Satan he appeared quite as devilish. Looking at him Jack felt that Moses must have had just that kind of a human thing in mind when he wrote the ten commandments. The first words uttered proved he was addicted to a certain kind of sausage. He growled:

"What yer sellin'?"

"Bibles," said Jack, "and I want to sell you one."

"Do ye?" he bellowed with a voice like a Scotch bag-pipe out of tune. "Well, I'll live to hear ye preach my funeral sermon ef ye do."

"But," said Jack, "I'm selling fifteen-dollar Bibles for nine dollars to-day."

"You be, be ye?" said the man. "Well, what yer goin' to do to-morrer? Every buyer, I suppose, by sellin' 'em for seven."

"No," replied Jack, "I have but one price—fifteen-dollar Bibles for nine dollars, and I'll sell you one for that."

"Will ye?" snarled the man. "I guess not to-day, nor to-morrer, nor next Christmas. Let me tell you somethin', youngster. I've been making so many of them fifteen-dollar investments for nine dollars during the past three years I'm gone dead busted."

To know when to quit is quite as important in the battle of life as to know when to

start. Embarrassed as a bachelor on the threshold of a bath full of fairies, Jack, feeling that such a man could never be brought to a decent flesh and blood consistency, begged pardon for having intruded upon his bunch of misfortunes and walked on, going slowly toward a small cottage over the way. He was discerning that to sell to those who want is easy, but to sell to those who don't want is real business. Every hour he was finding out things about mankind worthy of analysis. As he knocked at the cottage door an old woman opened it about half an inch and said:

"Well, what's doin'?"

At a glance Jack was convinced she did not belong to the Bible-class, for she looked capable of putting any Christian on his back and going through his pockets when she needed money.

"Madam," said he timidly, "I want to go to school and——"

"Well, why don't you mog along?" she broke in with a voice like the fretful cluck of an unsuccessful hen.

"But, madam," said Jack, "you're a lady and I would like——"

"You jest bet I'm a lady, and by thunder don't yer forgit it!" she screeched, looking as

though she could swallow a book agent without loosening her collar.

"I will try to remember you are a lady," said Jack with a grin, "and I hope to sell you a fifteen-dollar Bible——"

"Sellin' Bibles, be ye?" and she shot a glance at the poor boy that fairly stunned him. "Kid," droned she, "do yer know yer chance of flyin' to heaven in a battleship is better than sellin' Bibles in this house? It's too late. My old man had a dream last night and he saw me floatin' around in paradise with my angel plumage on, and his dreams go by contraries. If he'd seen me sailin' around in Hotland with asbestos skirts on there would have been a chance of unloadin' a Bible right here and now. If you had fire-proof corsets I'd buy; but Bibles—well it 'pears I ain't goin' where Bibles is popular."

When one is dancing in a temperature of ninety degrees how delightful it is to steal out upon a spacious lawn and "watch the fire-flies flitting through royal palms in a garden flooded with the rich glories of a harvest moon." Jack stole away from that overheated atmosphere and, entering a small park near by, sat down for rest and meditation.

Thus far the day had been a panorama of failures, but the star of hope still twinkled in

his breast, a faint belief that disappointments were behind, and success awaited just ahead. Thus hope forever lures men on. It has a potent influence, though it is ever serving out things it does not possess. It has been said that it is the balmy cordial and prospect bright; the nurse of young desire; the painted vapor; the glowworm fire; the tickler of fancy; a kind deceiver; a sweet flatterer; the earnest of delight, and like sleep, the softest soother of the mind. Jack arose and went forth to renewed effort.

A lean thing, with a composite man-and-monkey face, shoved up the window as he approached the next house, and bawled in a metallic voice:

"We don't buy no books at the door!"

"Madam," said Jack, questioning whether he had hit the right sex or not, "I will step inside if you prefer."

"Young man," said she, "if you will give that wood-pile a hot half hour I'll give you a warm bite, but we don't want no 'Encyclopedias,' nor 'On-a-bridge Websters,' nor 'Left-overs-done-over-by-the-Cook,' nor 'Be-your-own-Doctor,' nor 'Expurgatoried Lives of the Saints,' nor no books nohow."

"But," persisted Jack, "I have a fifteen-dollar Bible for nine dollars, and——"

"Git right out of here quicker than a flicker," broke in the composite-face, "and skip over to Hannah Skinner's with yer Bibles; they are low down with the small-pox there, and need religion more'n medicine."

Jack was now well convinced that most people wish book agents were centennial occurrences only, and Bible selling seemed a lost art. He turned to go, muttering, "Even a Mormon must be patient as well as chaste to live with such creatures, and be watched by a bevy of them." He paused and was about to back out in a hushed kind of a way, when it occurred to him that the woman might be bluffing and wanted a Bible after all, because her sex often say "no" when they mean "yes," just as a horse says "nay" when you offer him hay. Jack turned back, touched his hat to the old woman, and said:

"Madam, I am selling the Holy Word bound in morocco and——"

"Be ye?" blurted the woman. "Well, I suspect you'd better tog back to Morocco and quit huntin' Bible fiends around these diggin's, for what you'll need most in a minute is legs and lots on 'em. See that dog? Any book agent who comes around here ought to wear leather breeches and have the bosom saturated with strychnine, for that

pup will eat anything and is very fond of book agents."

Jack turned, and saw moving toward him a wild-eyed mastiff with ears and tail erect, apparently delighted with his immediate prospects.

"Take off your dog, madam," cried Jack nervously, "and I'll take off the Holy Word and we'll call it quits."

He did not wait for an answer, but grabbed his presence of mind and walked backward out of the open gate. So it went with him, poor fellow, all the day long. His luck had been worse than the colporteur's in Turkey, where propaganda explaining the use of the Scriptures is prohibited by law. That milestone in his life had been reached where a person is justified in feeling that any place other than the one he is in is the best place. Adversity had thus far been the rule of that day and the measure of misery seemed near.

Some persons are so nervous they consider every incident an accident, and every accident a calamity. Some fear pain who never have it. Some shrink from evils recollected; some pale at evils anticipated, and many are so tormented with that which never arrives they expect every minute to be their last.

Jack Stanley was made of sterner substance. While his string of failures were monotonous he had no desire to give up. To do that would have been as efficacious to right matters as would be the extraction of a bullet by an assassin from the heart of a man whom he had slain. Besides, he was cheered with the remembrance that even the Happy Valley disgusted Rasselas by the recurrence of its luxuries. Such experiences as Jack had confronted since leaving the home circle and friends would have made chinks in the buttressed walls of most boys' souls, but with him they were lessons, from which knowledge came, that fixed his determination to sell Bibles, because he now realized the need of them among men.

In the never-ending struggle for existence all men are allotted loads, but no pack is like that the book agent bears going from house to house, meeting with rebuffs so brutal they prove that the Levites are not all dead who pass the fallen man by because they know he has already been robbed. Jack had met many reverses, so many, that when one came it was second nature to go and find another, and he had not far to travel.

As the door of the next house opened a maid with a gentle voice invited him in. It

was the first amiable prospect, and a triumph seemed near. As Jack was about to drop into a rocker the mistress of the house appeared, and in tones of surprise exclaimed:

"Oh! I thought it was the new parson come to make his first call."

"Madam," said Jack, "I hope not to disappoint you, for while the parson may give you the Holy Word in sections, I can deliver it to you in bulk. And while he would require years in the deliverance, I can give you the whole thing, for nine dollars, while you wait."

The old lady smiled and waved him graciously to a seat. It was the sole evidence of hospitality he had seen through all that weary day, and it aroused in him thoughts both hopeful and happy.

"Madam," said he, "there is a language in every countenance that needs no interpreter; but this is all so unexpected it puzzles me. Does that smile mean you want a Bible?"

"Young man," said she, "you may not know that we all must be embedded in the same conglomerate with all kinds of devastators of the day, and it is wise to be decent with them here so we may be at peace with them there. Benevolence is a prime virtue

and it has taught me to treat every one humanely, even a book agent; for this reason I bid you welcome with a smile, but as to Bible buying that is another question."

The science of persuasion is in understanding human nature, and the purchasing spirit being partially manifest, the present moment seemed to be worth any forty that had passed that day.

"Madam," said Jack, "every one must defend and support himself; but when he puts forth his best and fails, what is to be done? All day long I have offered this fifteen-dollar Bible for nine dollars, and between the insults of persons and the assaults of dogs it is evident that any genius who will inspire some one in this community to give the glad hand to a mortal with the immortal Word of God for sale at any price will deserve to sit side by side in the temple of fame with the man who discovers perpetual motion."

To arouse sympathy first, then awake the sense of moral duty; then educate the judgment by well-selected phrases is the best procedure for a book agent in homes where they prefer the society of parsons to that of chumps, and Jack now felt that he was within that charmed circle.

"Madam," continued he, "the good deeds of to-day will live to-morrow, a kind act done now will stand sponsor for you when I am gone and you are alone with this fifteen-dollar Book of Books. It will introduce you where you are unknown; pay for you when you are without funds; toil for you while you slumber; soothe your sorrows; soften your pain, and when you go hence will help you in at the pearly gates. I conceive of no more beneficent deed than to buy a fifteen-dollar Bible for nine dollars. Buy it and send it down to posterity as an heirloom. Buy and make it the sacred family Bible. No family ought to be without one, for while God may have created so many common people because He loves them, He will have little love for Bibleless families, be they never so common."

What an easement it was for Jack to say this. Through the disheartening experiences of the day his word batteries had been silenced by negative persons and menacing whelps. He knew that a successful book agent must be a rapid-fire word-battery and let no mark, shining or otherwise, escape. He knew that the kindly jest, the pleasant talk, mingled with a few soft compliments, such as characterize a back parlor scene at night,

with two lovers in one chair, was the right lingo for maidens and young widows, but the subject that fronted him now required rhetoric and plenty of it. He also realized that he who goes ahead, stands still, or goes to sleep at the right time has solved the problem of life, and now was the time to go ahead.

"Madam," he said, "all day long I have faced rebuffs to find a friendly shelter here. I have learned what Bible-selling means where Bibles are unfashionable, and yearning for some kind benison to fall I entered here where I hope to leave this Book, here in this home which seems its natural habitat."

The old lady beamed sympathetically, hitched her chair a trifle closer, and said:

"Man is such a riddle as an individual, and, in the total, such a nut-to-crack, that I am not surprised at the treatment you have received." For a moment Jack felt that he was in the midst of a great opportunity if he could only think of the right thing to say, but the old lady continued. "You spoke of family Bibles,—I love them, I dote on them, they possess such an air of hospitality. In them we recall the dead faces when we want them, bid them stay as long as we wish, and send them away when we will. They are such a consolation; they exhilarate the spirit

and restore the tone of soul-peace. But, young man, what if I don't need one?"

It was abruptly made manifest to young Stanley that nothing is more uncertain with a woman than a sure thing. His lips parted to speak, when the old lady prevented by saying:

"I have a family Bible, and it was so popular I had to fight the whole family to get it. It was a prolonged effort, and loosened up family ties quite a bit, but as it is well preserved it comes to more than it cost. It contains a record of marriages, births, and deaths for five generations. It inspires one with sacred memories. Joy, sorrow, hope and romance gleam through its open doorway. In it are the shining links dropped from the chain that bound the family circle for twelve decades. The names of those who have passed through the dark gate, and across the wild that no man knows, are there. When death stilled the fitful star of their lives their names found place upon its sacred pages. Through all these fateful years it has borne the family tree and within its hallowed covers are reunited a host time has disbanded. Dead though they are, still in this book they seem to live, visiting with us and we with them, growing no longer old,

but gliding o'er our memories like summer shadows o'er a stream. My father's kindly face is there, my mother's angel brow, and there their pleasant smiles fall on me, and oftentimes I seem to hear them call my name. So through and in and around it seem to cling the sweetest thoughts of life. All else may prove false, but that honored Book, the family Bible, will remain the safest counselor and friend. It teaches us the way to live and how to die. No mines of earth can ever hold such priceless gems, no dreamland scenes such visions rare. Trees nursed by those whose names its pages bear now sing to alien ears. The streams that murmur sweetest music Nature ever gives flow swiftly to the boundless sea but bring no word from them; the woodland has forgotten their laughter, and the shady paths their feet, yet in the pages of this Book we hear and see them still. No melody of forest sounds, nor thrilling notes of summer birds, nor murmuring voice of mountain stream can be so dear to me as their remembered words." As she finished she produced a broad, triumphant smile and said, "Young man, I fairly dote on family Bibles; but I have one and need another about as much as a pocket needs a hole."

It was a stunning blow to the young agent. He had played the game of words as best he could. He had waged a battle in which he had spilt words like water, but he found himself beaten by a royal vocabulary on the lips of a past master in phrases. He felt chagrined, embarrassed, and disappointed. Again he was a hope poorer and an experience richer. Once more he had met a woman engaged in dilating herself with the wrong emotion. This time she resembled Deacon Hoback, who in trying to make people feel good, tried so hard that he made them feel uncomfortable, a success akin to that of the wife in her efforts to place the slippers of her husband in the right spot. From what Jack Stanley had learned that day he thanked the Lord he was not created all eyes and ears, but had been well supplied with legs. As he contemplated these things the aching need of repose came over him. He arose, bowed with cold courtesy to the old lady just as she turned to greet the new parson, and walked out into the gloom of the night. He was alone with his Maker, the Bible, and a blank subscription book. He thought of and about several thoughts. One especially interested him. Had the hour struck for him to go home and steal noiselessly into the family

vault, or should he seek some quiet place and sit, like a Turk, down to cross-legged melancholy? He was not sure, nor was he happy, so he moved slowly on in meditation.

"In the swaying to and fro of molecules; in the ceaseless pulsation of ether; in the secular shifting of planetary orbits; in the busy work of frost and raindrops; in the mysterious sprouting of the seed; in the everlasting tale of life and death," was revealed to Jack Stanley an opening through which shone the glory of Eternal Majesty; but just why this omniscient force tolerated so much blind indifference to Holy Writ in a town with two schools and seven churches was beyond his ken; but he was young. As he grew older he learned more about modern life and the interposition of Providence in the affairs of men.

Unimportant as all this may appear, it was of intense interest to Jack Stanley. He felt it necessary to get an education, but he could not find it in an empty subscription book. He also felt it necessary to exist, but no one in that alien community seemed to recognize the necessity. He felt the isolation and gloom of one who walks alone amid the wreck of hopes. His last chance of making a sale seemed gone. He began to realize what it

means, when young, to go into a strange land, amid strange faces, where one can clasp no mother's hand nor listen to a father's kind advice, nor receive a sister's tender kiss, nor hear a friend's welcome call. Bible selling in that alien land had been a fruitless mission. He was through, and he was glad he was through. He turned his steps toward the railway station with thoughts of home and friends which relieved the gloom of the deserted thoroughfare. As he passed slowly on, recalling the events of the day, he was suddenly attracted by a sobbing voice issuing from an open window over the way. He stepped swiftly across the dimly lighted street and paused at the gate to listen. It was a female voice in fervent supplication. It was the voice of Eurette Betts, the star old maid of that wicked old town, and she was saying:

"In distress I come unto Thee, O Lord, for help. I have balanced on the lid of single life until the limit of maidenly endurance has been reached. What I want is a robust man, and if he don't come soon I must look forward to a horizon of discontent. Verily, verily, man seemeth an apparatus of elusion. Delays are dangerous, O Lord, at my time of life, therefore let me sit down no longer in the day, and sit up no longer in the night

with unrealized anticipations. Give me the substance, O Lord, and give it soon. If through Thy mercy an able-bodied man should come within reach I will see that he don't get away of his own accord for several reasons."

The opportune hour was striking, and Jack must act quickly. In the dim light that came from the window he opened the sample Bible, turned down the leaf at the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, sixth verse, and stepped to the door and rapped gently. Skirts rustled, feet scurried, then there was silence. He rapped again louder and more prolonged. The door slowly swung on its hinges, and the star old maid, ugly enough to be barred from all fields of human endeavor except bridge whist, cautiously peeped out.

"Madam," said Jack, "I have here a fifteen-dollar Bible——"

"It's no use, young man," said she, waving her hand and shaking the atmosphere with protests. "It's no use; I'm no hard siter at books; and what's more, I wish the first book agent had fallen out of the Ark into fifty fathoms of water and taken his whole progeny with him."

"But, madam," said Jack, "this Bible is beautifully illustrated. It contains pictures of

all the famous weddings and love romances of Holy Writ." As he said this he handed Eurette the Bible, taking good care that it should fall open at the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, sixth verse. She glanced indifferently over the page at first, then suddenly her whole midriff was given up to ardor and her eyes shone with a new light. She read:

"Behold the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him."

It was a moment among ten thousand. The hour had struck; the star of hope twinkled; and Eurette Betts felt the Lord was about to answer her prayer.

Jack Stanley could no more have taken the sample Bible from that ancient maid than he could have snatched a star from the skies. No one outside of Bedlam would have tried. Jack did not. He quietly buttoned the nine one-dollar bills up in his wallet, thanked Eurette, and walked out into the darkness.

Experience had taught Jack Stanley much in the effort to sell one Bible. At the same ratio the sale of ten would make him as wise as the whole Academy of France. He found that self-interest will take or reject a Bible, and that in the majority of human actions self-interest is the moving spirit, just as

in every horse trade the prime factor is the Devil. He learned that while the Lord brought him into the world to work, it was also intended that he should be worked. He was convinced that the longer one lives the more he must endure the elementary existence of man, for if the Master made all men equal to-day they would make themselves unequal to-morrow. He found that a reconciliation between the theories and practices of men is impossible, because their deeds never measure up to their words. He had not lived long, but long enough to discover that hoped-for perfection is the most insidious disease that ever harmed the brain, because it is unattainable. He was persuaded that being over-good means non-success, non-success means failure, and failure means a quiet berth among the "never was," which is just as hapless as a "never-will-be." He learned that common sense is the saving grace of valid minds, that tact and patience are its handmaids, and he who knows the true use of these will possess a mighty resource against defeat in the push and pull of modern life. In the work of Bible selling from house to house he found that troubles are a social brotherhood, and come hand in hand, and stand side by side, along the path of

every agent. In a hard day's work he sold one Bible. He sold it to an old maid in a town adorned with seven churches. He sold it by appealing to her to cheer her lonely life by robbing some man of his single blessedness, and, incidentally, transmit her virtues to posterity. To do it he had run the gauntlet of cynical men, impudent women, and vicious brutes, and as the shadows of night gathered about him he realized that one is happiest where he is best known and knows the most people, and he went back to his native town, resigned his agency, and commenced, as best he could, his student life.

A SPIRITUALISTIC CATASTROPHE

NEWS was daily coming from over the sea that diviners, soothsayers, and clairvoyants were visiting imperial palaces, and seance after seance was being held in high places. From urban and suburban regions in the United States came frequent reports that the spiritualistic microbe had inoculated the upper circles and was spreading the psychologic epidemic even to the lower strata of the toiling world.

At this time Jack Stanley was attending the High School in a beautiful town in central New York, and during his sojourn there he lived with a kind relative who permitted him to work for his bed and board. A medium visited the town and excited the community by some remarkable conferences with the dead. The medium not only conversed with the spirits of his own departed friends, but he talked with ghosts of former residents to whom he had never been introduced. The seances were in a large hall, which was crowded every night with curious and credu-

lous people. Even the skeptic who came to scoff remained to marvel at the medium's work. He was clever and knew his art. "Nothing," said he, "is lost, for what is done is done forever, whether written or unwritten on the page of mortal sense; for the vibration of a single note of music will linger in motion through the corridors of eternity."

He seemed to penetrate as far into the adytum of the temple of occult force, which enshrines the mystic cord uniting spirit with matter, as any one who is or has been tabernacled in the flesh. He was a past master in supernaturalism, which is the woof spun by the hands of a powerful but invisible existence that incloses all human life and shapes all human destiny. He claimed that the moment the soul is disembodied it acquires a perfection of form which characterizes it through all the ages, and the progress of these bodies is slow and not marked by leaps and bounds. He insisted that when these spirits enter a dark room they must grope their way like mortals, during which time they are invisible to us as we are to them; but if a well-developed medium is present the air surrounding him becomes luminous, by the light of which persons and objects are more or less distinctly perceived. He said an

atmosphere delicately perfumed with violet, neroli, bergamot or Florida water is very agreeable to spirits and aids manifestations, and that the *spiritual world* is a vast realm to which spirits from our earth and all other worlds meet together and are equally related, while on the other hand the *spirit-world* is a series of zones associated with our planet which revolve with it,—both in its diurnal and solar revolutions, and are fixed in their relation to it. “No such beings,” said he, “as elementaries, fairies, elves, sprites, gnomes, kobolds, fauns, satyrs, and demons exist in the spirit-world, as everything semi-human would be out of place.” He told of solids and liquids, of electrons and atoms, of entities and non-entities. He said that if mortals possessed eyes to see by electricity, which is an ether relative of light, they would see things that are non-conductors, while the remaining solid-seeming world would be invisible. He argued that an atom of hydrogen contains a thousand powerful entities called electrons, while an atom of mercury contains one hundred thousand, and the relative sizes of the mercurial and hydrogenic electrons are like a cart wheel compared to a full stop. When the medium declared that these particles can be dematerialized and put as much

out of reach of the most delicate tests of science as is the essence that forms the soul, and that these minute entities of awful potency are prime factors in the soul itself, Jack, hearing all this, was as bewildered as though the brain-haze microbe had made easy lodgment in his gray matter. Still he was fascinated with the argument.

When the medium claimed that electrons occupy an atom something as a colony of ants occupy a ten-acre lot, and yet one gramme of electrons contains force enough to lift the Washington monument on to the top of Pike's Peak without straining a muscle, Jack's head felt like the pate of a cyclist who made an involuntary effort to smooth down a road covered with cracked stone; and when the medium said that an ether atom can permeate a material atom and become an electronic trinity in an atomic unity, a condition which scientists consider as absurd as the luminous end of a glowworm hitched to the rear end of a mosquito, Jack was not sure that he had any head at all.

But the practical demonstrations of the medium are what puzzled him as much as the colic puzzles a camel when its seventh stomach is involved. Luminous appearances occurred. Hands self-illuminated, or visible

by natural or artificial light, were passed about in shaking attitudes. Skeptics grasped them, and, while they made no effort to get away, they gradually resolved into nebulous matter, leaving the hands of unbelievers empty and their minds full of perturbed thoughts. Once a nebulous cloud appeared, condensed itself into a shapely hand, plucked flowers from a vase on the table at which the medium was sitting, and presented them to the faithful who stood near the place of manifestation. To tell an unembroidered truth, the movements of several heavy substances, such as chairs and desks, were inexplicable to Jack except as a phenomena of some mysterious force.

When he observed a desk, placed in an exposed position, slowly arise from the floor, while two persons held the medium in his chair, it was with difficulty that he prevented himself from a burst of applause. But it must be confessed with reluctance that these manifestations were nothing compared to what some of the more sensitive minds said they saw while Jack was absent. They claimed that the bonnet of a spinster was lifted from her wig, and floating through the auditorium, remained poised over the head of an old bachelor, and the medium

observed that it was an evidence of affinity, as well as a happy omen, at which the entire audience gave itself up to nervous glee. Some, who were scantily supplied with gray matter, insisted that during one of the seances the medium, by some occult force, was raised from the floor, and, floating out of one open window, was wafted in at another, during low lights, while an invisible organist played the national anthem with variations. Fortunately, Jack did not witness these manifestations, for he was already saturated with psychology, and other concealed things, sufficient to make him a good medium of the mysterious forces.

During one of the seances the medium maintained that the air is teeming with the spirits of the dead. He said that he used the word "teeming" advisedly, because, since Cain killed Abel over twenty-five billions of mortals had taken on immortality. In other words, so many bodied spirits had become disembodied and were floating around through cosmic ether that if it were not for the fact that several can occupy the same space at the same time they would have to use folding tooth brushes for the want of room.

And the professor permitted other remark-

able statements to escape from his gray matter. He said that around the living constantly hover these rarely visible, but always present, astral bodies, composed of fixed ether. Of course, Jack Stanley was impressed. He was so impressed that he would not sit down when he was tired for fear of resting on some departed ancestor or friend. In this nervous condition he left the seance one night at the hour when church yards are busy, feeling very much like an ethero-material phenomenon himself.

It was his duty, every night before retiring, to fix the furnace, which was located at the farthest end of a long dark cellar, in the home where he lodged. As he entered the old-fashioned house the tall clock in the hall struck the hour of midnight, and each stroke sounded like a muffled moan. As these died away a dead silence filled the hallway and the deserted rooms on either side. All were in deep sleep throughout the house. Jack groped his way in the darkness to the cellar door and timidly swung it open. It creaked on its hinges and he started back. Then, as he cautiously approached the doorway and peered into the blackness below, slowly from its depths a group of manifestations floated up the cellar stairway, and

vaporous hands seized him and smothered voices cried, "Come with us," and he seemed drawn down into the opaque gloom below.

A startled rat scurried across the cellar floor. To Jack it seemed a bunch of sub-mundane agents whose rasping voices threaded the denseness of the night. He moved slowly toward the furnace, and the laughter of ghostly legions greeted him on either side, while behind were echoing footsteps of pursuit, then the laughter turned to hisses as if snakes were at his back. He hurried to the furnace. A group stood there with waving arms and yellow eyes. Jack gripped his hands to still the beating of his heart. He never had believed in ghosts, but like most mortals he feared them, and now that they were crowding about him, and pushing each other in their eagerness to get near, and creeping up silently from all directions, peering at him from out of the gloom, he could feel the glitter of their yellow eyes, and he was stunned and stupefied.

The furnace seemed a blazing creature radiating intense heat from its grim form. He seized the door, opened it, and the ghostly denizens of the cellar began to batten their eyes in the sudden light. He shook the grate and the metallic ring of the iron made

music for the astral bodies, and they stared and shook their vaporous heads and filled all the place with husky laughter.

Jack rushed his appointed task and hurried back across the long reach of cellar. The creatures of the night chuckled as he passed by, opening their mouths so wide they seemed to laugh in their ears. Some beckoned, some threatened, and a sea of white faces pursued and gave out wild sobs that did not belong to this world. He pushed on to rid himself of the vaporous forms, and reaching the narrow stairway rushed up by leaps and bounds, slamming the door upon the scene of horror as the last pursuing spirit hissed some wild jargon in his throbbing ears.

He hurried through the darkness to his room, surrounded by a dimly luminous group that resembled puffs of smoke. He longed for flesh and blood companionship, but as all were in deep sleep throughout the great house, he was destined to tread the ghostly wine-press alone.

He quickly lit the gas and gave a sigh of relief. Undressing, he pushed himself into his pajamas, turned down a heavy quilt that hung over the footboard onto the bed, crept under the cover, pulled the clothes tight over his head and breathed an extra prayer. All

was still, but his mind would not rest. He counted ten nine times to win sleep. He looked persistently in imagination at the end of his nose to conquer wakefulness. That failed. He tried to persuade himself that it was absurd to give way to such wild fancies, but he continued to give way.

In the midst of this agitation his attention was called to an almost imperceptible movement on the coverlid just over his abdomen. Was it a slew of witch ponies prancing on his stomach? He thought he felt the soft thud, thud of their hoofs upon the quilt. He was not sure. It might be anything at that time of night. He syphoned his brain to solve the riddle, failed, and waited for the next manifestation. It came, the same almost imperceptible tread. What in the name of atoms could it be? Was it a fortuitous course of unrelated psychodes disputing which should enter a high or low vacuum first? Of this he was not certain, but he was sure he could stand the mystery no longer. He summoned what courage remained, shut his eyes, uncovered his head, sat upright, and passed his hands nervously over the quilt. Nothing was there but the soft quilt. He sank back puzzled, and pulled his head snug under the cover.

If Jack Stanley ever needed electro-biologic power to solve a mystery he wanted it now. He was confused and scared. The quickened thud of the blood pump, and the click of the tall clock, alone broke the silence. He gathered his thoughts for one mighty think.

"It is the imagination of a morbid brain," said he, "and has naught to do with cosmic emotion." These words were scarcely uttered when another gentle tread was felt on his abdomen. It was accompanied by a sobbing moan. Could it be the awful potency of minute entities struggling to get in or out of a group of atoms, or was it an electron pushing its way into space occupied by an over-crowded psychode? He could not say. He only knew that he felt the presence and heard the moan, a smothered moan like that of a wounded animal. An unfettered thrill of mystery and fear swarmed through his frightened soul. He could bear the nervous strain no longer. He shut his eyes, unmantled his head, sat erect, and seizing the top quilt with both hands, lifted it high—when, whiz, biff, bang! a white cat scrambled over his face and scurried to the floor! Quick as a flash Jack sprang after the bunch of fur-covered vortex atoms, seized it by the tail, rushed

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through the hall, down the stairs and out of the back door, and when the *ghostus felinus*, the family tabby, landed, it was twenty feet from the house and buried so deep in the snow that just enough tail was left in sight to mark the catastrophe.

CHECKING A RUDE HABIT

IN all communities there are people who seem born to make those about them uncomfortable. "You look poorly." "Are you ill?" "You look sallow." "What's the matter with you?" "You look so awfully thin." Do you recognize any of these pet terms? When you are nervous, tired and troubled, have you not had some kind friend approach and hurl two or three of them at you? Of course you have, because they are common words spoken to mortals already burdened with trials enough, by people who lack that virtue,—the most sturdy of all human attributes,—tact.

When Jack Stanley came home on his first vacation he was pale and thin from overstudy. He was not ill, but as the propensity to say, "What's the matter with you?" "You look thin." "Why are you so pale?" was very robust in his native town, he had not been home a week when he imagined he possessed all the ills of which the flesh is capable. As he walked the streets and passed in and out of friendly circles he was greeted

with, "How pale you are." "You look thin." "What's the matter with you," until his troubled soul was fired with resentment and he said:

"I am opposed to this wretched habit and I will break it though I may gain no fame by the attempt. It shall never be said of me, its victim, that I died and made no effort. The next person who mentions to me my paleness or thinness will hear something drop with a thud."

Scarcely had Jack uttered these words when the amiable pastor, in whose church he was baptized, and under whose ministrations he communed, turned the corner and met him face to face. It was unfortunate, but it happened just as many embarrassing things happen in this life.

"What's the matter, Jack? You look awfully thin," cried the dear old tactless divine, stretching out a friendly hand. It was too bad, but it had to occur. Without reserve, in full and ample tones, backed up by two snapping gray eyes, Jack said:

"Yes, Domine Johnson, I am looking thin, and what is worse yet, you make me feel damn thin! Good morning, sir," and he walked on, leaving the reverend Mr. Johnson transfixed with thought.

One might as well expect to hear bullets whistle popular airs as to have hoped, at that instant, to fathom the thoughts of that good, tactless old pastor. It is the consensus of well-balanced opinion that a man is excusable for gently swearing when, in his efforts to escape, he gets fast in a barbed-wire fence while an excited ram located in his rear is shouting, "Buttin', buttin', who's got the buttin' now?" But the minister, having always considered Jack a model young man, as far as model young men go, could not comprehend this harsh reply, and concluded that boarding-school life was affecting his morals seriously.

It is not reasonable to pray for rain and then when it rains get angry because you have no umbrella, neither is it fair to rap at the front door of a hornet's house and expect to look pretty the next morning. The domine got what was coming to him. He had failed in the common courtesy that every man owes to another, for nothing is so discourteous as making a human being uncomfortable without cause.

The habit of saying things that create unhappiness is a weakness of ill-bred persons, and you might as well ask a modern Adam to go back to Eden and turn over a

new leaf as to hope for escape from this inbred impudence.

The morbid tendency of some people to make others miserable, as the course Mr. Johnson pursued is sure to do, demands heroic treatment, and every one who has been a victim of this stupid mania will agree that the parson received a drastic remedy quite suited to his noisome disease.

Some men wear single eye-glasses because they can see with one eye all they can comprehend. Some wear a woe-begone expression at weddings, and some giggle at funerals. It is the want of knowing how to do the right thing at the right time that trips down some well-intending people. Thus it is the want of tact and courtesy that project annoyances into life. If men possess tact they never wound the feelings of others without cause. It is a fact that the Lord puts up with many people we can't put up with; amiable people, perhaps, who never intend to get onto the nerves of others, but who lack the sense of true politeness which always graces a well-bred man. Good breeding is to be natural, provided one is naturally polite, and natural politeness has created more happiness and more triumphs than any other virtue in man. No monument bears a nobler inscription than,

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“He tried to make others happy.” The richest man who does nothing to soften misery and inspire hope is a pauper compared to the poor man who is worthy of that inscription. The men who, from want of tact, bring unhappiness to others will find it easier to render vocal music on a harp than to obtain favor among generous souls.

THE CRY OF THE DEAD

A FEW miles from the home of Jack Stanley was a logging camp located in a wild and lonely region. In the settlement lived a comely brunette who loved and was betrothed to one of the young lumbermen. After a while the brawny lover wearied of woodland life and went to a nearby town to secure work, promising to return in a short time for his bride. But he fell in love with a shapely blonde and wrote his fiancée the truth with brutal frankness, inclosing a picture of his new sweetheart in the letter.

The blue devils are never quite as blue as when a blonde defeats a brunette in the battle of love, for defeat means bitter grief and even death in some cases.

Jack's father was justice of the peace and ex-officio coroner for the town and surrounding country. One night while Jack was home on his summer vacation the coroner was aroused from his sleep by a courier who had ridden into town from the backwoods to notify him that a young girl living in an isolated valley some three miles away had

been discovered near a timber camp, hanging to the limb of a tree, and the belief was that a brutal outrage and murder had been committed. The coroner summoned a jury at once and requested Jack to serve.

It was a forbidding mission. The night was threatening, sullen cloud masses were pushing up from the horizon, and the flashes of light along their borders gave warning of an oncoming storm. Even in daylight the journey was a hard one, but at night it was surrounded with many difficulties, and on a dark night it was almost a hopeless task. It was over a rough country road, which terminated half a mile from the scene of the mysterious death, and from this point the jury were compelled to make their way on foot along a desolate trail which threaded a wild ravine whose sharp flanks were covered with pine and hemlock. The night wind, a restless wind that warned the wayfarers of an approaching storm, moaned in the gorge and breathed its doleful music through the trees as if chanting dirges for the dead. The lightning began to play about them as they toiled slowly through the narrow pass where giant pine and hemlock stood, like phantom sentinels guarding the scene.

He who has never been in the depths of a

great forest during a black and stormy night does not know the meaning of solitude. The ceaseless wail that drifts through the haunted chambers of the woods, and the masses of dull clouds that sweep the branches with their trail of wind, give to the stern and solemn voices of the pines an inexpressible sound of anguish. The anthem of the pine needles; the roar of the angry stream; the squeak of the vagrant wood bat; the hoot of the grey-coated owl; the scream of the startled night-hawk—these are the strange sounds that issue from the sable trappings of the night, for only birds of prey brood among trees that moan and sigh.

The storm gathered in fury and the rain spat spitefully in the faces of the men as they hurried through the rugged gorge, stumbling over fallen timber and crowding by jutting crag, while ever and anon the cry of the restless catamount came from the mountain slope and the noises of the storm-devils seemed to answer the call of the wild. Slowly they penetrated deeper and deeper into the gloom of the unknown way, facing the blast as it howled down the narrowing defile and wrenched at every branch, hurling its weapons headlong across their way. Suddenly from out of the dark aisles of the forest

came faint and broken voices like the gibber of quarreling gnomes and night witches, and as the men paused to listen they discovered high up on the flank of the gorge a dim light like some far-off phosphorescent glow. Then in the moment of hush between the refrain of the wind and of the thunder, the shrill voice of the coroner cried "Where is the body of the dead?" and through the darkness came the faint reply, "Up here on the mountain side."

The depths of a great forest at night is a lonely place. A wide-reaching woodland moved and swayed by the storm-god when darkness broods upon the earth is the embodiment of gloom, but a wild ravine in the heart of a pine forest at midnight and surrounded by the mystery of death will chill the blood of the bravest man and fill his heart with awe.

It was a rough and pathless journey up the rugged side of the gorge, the way that led to the place of death, and after battling against blinding sheets of rain the jury reached the timber camp. There, surrounding the storm-smothered embers of a fire, they found a group of stolid axmen who resembled bandits more than kindly men performing a mission of mercy. "Where is the

body?" the coroner asked in a low voice, and a silent gesture from the leader of the woodsmen indicated the place. They looked, and through the gloom, not far away, could be faintly seen the form of a girl clothed in white suspended from the low limb of a sturdy oak, one of the few that had made their home on the border of the great pine forest. A sudden onrush of wind turned the dead girl's face toward the camp fire, and the fitful flames illumined it with a strange glow.

A solemn hush wrapped the scene for a moment as the men peered into the darkness, catching the dim outlines of the form as it swayed in the wind. There were a few hurried words of consultation with one who seemed to be a leader of the axmen. Then the coroner beckoned his men to follow as he made his way to the fateful spot. A careful examination was made and it was found necessary for some one to mount the tree and untie the knot of the rope, so that the body could be lowered to the earth. The coroner called for a volunteer, and Jack Stanley impulsively responded. As he worked his way up the tree and reached the limb from which the body was hanging, the white face of the dead girl was so near, and the wide-open eyes

strained at him with such a pleading stare, that he turned away in horror, momentarily unnerved for his task. Should he go back or stay and do the work he had volunteered to do? He stayed, but he has often said that rather than face the stare of those wild eyes again he would prefer to be stoned like Stephen, or pierced with arrows like Sebastian.

A man up a tree on a black night, in the midst of a terrific thunder storm, with lurid lightning flashing forked and zigzagging through the air as he hangs on with his feet while he vainly tries to undo the knot of a rope that clinches the throat of a dead body, while the wide-open eyes glare at him in mute appeal, is thrilling but not attractive, as Jack Stanley realized. And yet while the situation was startling, a more shocking thing soon came to pass.

Two stalwart woodsmen had been stationed beneath the body to catch it when it fell. They were giant fellows, strong as oxen, and looked fierce enough to handle death without fear. But it comes to pass in this contradictory life that some men who boastfully declare in health that they will welcome death no matter when the white specter may grasp them, will, as soon as the

first symptoms of disease are felt, call in a syndicate of doctors. These two burly woodsmen were conspicuous examples of this class.

Jack summoned courage and remained at his post of duty, trying to untie the knot. The wind was howling in great blasts through the branches of the tree, and sighing mournfully as she trailed her garments over the towering pines which surrounded him, and the lightning, in flashes, illuminated all with its yellow light. The jury and axmen had formed a semicircle about the tree and the firelight fell upon their anxious faces as they stood bareheaded watching the ghostly form mirrored in the gloom. No word was spoken, but all eyes were turned toward Jack and the weird figure so near him. He tugged nervously at the knotted rope. It yielded slightly just as a sudden rush of wind fanned the dying embers of the campfire into temporary life. Darkness paled before the glare and the glare melted again into blackness. In the brief light the face shone white and the glazed eyes seemed to batten and blink at him with such a glitter as mortals seldom see. Then came darkness, and a slow-drawn moan was heard like a muffled cry from out the deep of the night. Overcome with terror Jack had an impulse to desert his task, when

a thrill of shame came over him and he stayed at his work. Again there came a sudden gust and with it a blinding flash. A swift bolt fell from the angry sky and smote to death a monarch tree near by with a shock that rocked the forest like an earthquake. The blaze of light revealed a slight struggle on the dead girl's face. There was a quaver in her body and the eyeballs seemed to move and again appeal for help. "Am I dealing with life or death?" thought Jack. "Can I bear the strain and mystery of it any longer?" A strange fear took hold of him and a tight grip was on his brain as if an invisible hand had been laid upon him. His throat was feverish; his muscles quivered; his heart beat quick, and for a moment he seemed to reel with the shadows. He paused in his hideous task and silently appealed to the jury for relief.

Only the wind answered with deep-drawn sighs and the pines breathed on their endless moan.

Again the fire flamed dimly and as quickly died away. A momentary lull came in the storm, and all was still. Then a rush of wind set the great pines in wild commotion, and, with an alarming crash, the lightning once more hurled a destroying bolt at a

near-by tree and spread a yellow glare over sky and woodland. In this flash of light the dead body swayed and turned its wan face full upon Jack. The wild eyes seemed to stir in their sockets and peered straight into his, and the lips apparently moved in speech. Then came another flash followed by a terrific roar, then darkness, and as the white face faded in the gloom the knot gave way and out of the deep blackness came a piercing, unearthly cry—and it came from the throat of the falling dead!

"God o' Mercy, God o' Mercy! she's alive!" shouted the two brawny men, who stood to catch the body as it fell. Dropping it in their fright, they plunged down the steep sides of the chasm, followed a short distance by the rolling corpse, and did not pause until they rushed across the threshold of their home a mile or more away.

But they had flown from a dead and harmless thing. The frightful cry came when the pressure of the rope on the suicide's throat was released, and the pent-up gases rushing over the vocal cords sounded the hideous moan, a moan which men say still echoes in the deep of night through those forest aisles and among the crags of that wild gorge.

A PROPHECY REALIZED

DURING one of Jack's summer vacations he was engaged as assistant attorney in a remarkable case. Not far from his town lived a burly young farmer with an invalid mother and blind sister. He worked the small farm on shares for his mother, and at her death was to become part owner of the place with his sister, and if she died before her brother he was to have the farm in fee simple. In his service was an orphan boy twelve years of age who was to receive a monthly wage of twelve dollars. For a long time he had received no wages, and from time to time he importuned the farmer for payment. One day the man conceived a plan of ridding himself of the little fellow and the debt at the same time. He placed a silver dollar on the floor of the kitchen and concealed himself to watch results. The boy entered the room, and seeing the dollar picked it up and put it in his pocket. The farmer rushed suddenly from his place of concealment, seized him, beat him brutally, and then charged him with theft. The orphan begged for mercy, but

the farmer unrelentingly told him that if he would take the next train at a station five miles away, cross the line into an adjoining State, and never return, he would not prosecute him, otherwise he would send him to jail. Frightened and helpless, the boy agreed to go and the farmer allowed him to retain the dollar with which to pay his fare.

A few hours afterward the orphan appeared at the railway station in the village, weeping and in great distress. A man noticing his troubled face asked him some questions and discovered that the farmer owed him forty dollars in back wages and was forcing him out of the State to avoid paying the debt. He took the lad to his own home and secured a warrant against the farmer for attempting to defraud an employé of his wages.

At this time Jack was practicing law before the justice's court during his vacation, and was engaged with a regular attorney to prosecute the case. After a long and exciting trial the farmer was convicted and sentenced to pay the wage amount and the costs.

In summing up the case Jack said in part: "Some men are naturally good, some innately bad. It is as easy for the latter to sin as it is for the former to do right, but it

seldom happens that a man can be as brutally mean as this defendant. Could anything be more contemptible than that which he has done? A man who could set a trap to rob a helpless orphan of his hard-earned wage would under certain conditions be capable of committing murder."

Within three months this prophecy was realized. The farmer, in order to get full possession of the farm and at the same time rid himself of the burden of his helpless mother and sister, deliberately brained the former with a sledge hammer and choked the sightless girl to death with his own hands, then chaining their bodies to a log sled dragged them six miles to a railway crossing and left them on the track to be struck by a fast freight and mangled beyond recognition. It does not seem possible that the human tabernacle could harbor such a soul.

THE HOBACK-TOPPER FEUD

THERE is no hero in this story, but as every tale should have one and as Hoback and Topper are the chief characters in it, and as each was an evil, the least has been chosen by making Deacon Hoback as much of a hero as circumstances will permit.

The narrative is a history of the Hoback-Topper Feud, showing how the deacon triumphed over the sexton by out-living him after twenty years of bitter rivalry which left little of the church except the interest-devouring mortgage, and that was finally foreclosed by the sheriff, and the sacred temple became the refuge of traveling shows—a climax manifestly contrary to the law of the survival of the fittest.

The quaint little village in which the Hoback-Topper Feud was born and nurtured and in which Jack Stanley lived for a while, nestled in a river valley of rare beauty. It was beautiful enough to make all of its inhabitants sweet-tempered, kind, and happy. But were they?

The town was famous for its bluestone

walks, its fine shade trees and wholesome water supply, but the village fathers had overlooked the question of sewage to such an extent that a healthy nose could detect twenty-one different odors in a short walk about the place. It was also noted for its stone school-house and five churches. To keep the school supplied with teachers of sufficient tact to satisfy parents and pupils gave the directors a mountain of trouble. As for the churches, it may be recorded without wounding the truth, that they were large enough for three such towns, and were decorated with mortgages, which hung like millstones around their steeples, while five devoted ministers were harnessed to the church debts and left to pull the loads alone.

In this village lived Deacon Ante Hoback and Sexton Triple Topper, both members of the same church, and each determined to run it along lines suited to his individual conceits.

Deacon Ante Hoback had a reputation for peculiar religious activity that extended miles in all directions and made him, with the exception of the constable, the widest known man in town. He was an all-round person by trade and possessed as rare an anatomy as nature, even in her sourest mood, has ever allowed.

His plump and pinguid figure, topped by a bullet head on a curtailed neck, was supported by legs shorter than his body, in fact, so short and bandy that, in order to cover the defect, he wore trousers so wide they fit him like a skin made for a smaller dog. He was also red headed to a degree that some called ten-candle hot, and this came from a wig he wore to match a pair of madder-red side-whiskers. His chin was stubbed, chopped off, as it were, and pushed in like his nose, which nature or accident had stuck a trifle to one side of his lubberly face; and, while there was hardly enough of it to be out of place, his old foe Topper insisted there was plenty to absorb a ruby hue during the period in which the Deacon did the agricultural trick of sowing his wild oats.

Of Sexton Topper it is well to say that as far as his influence extended, he produced trouble. He was no friend of Hoback, never had been, and often said he never would be "Till Kingdom come." And why? That will be understood later. It is sufficient to note, at this juncture, that Triple Topper was a none-such. Nature seemed to have had trouble in making him, and in the end, threw him together carelessly. To see him with both eyes and nearby, meant that you could never get

away from the sight unto your dying day. He was one of those humans it is an inexpressible pleasure to know as little of as possible. Some even went so far as to say that his portrait was unfit for publication. He was so thin that Death would have had no difficulty in making a ghost of him. His head, in which there were brain lofts to let, ran up to a peak, whereas the Deacon's rounded off flat-like; and to increase this attractiveness, he was perpetually surrounded by ten feet of pestiferous smell of onions and plug tobacco. As for his face, it was so wizen, and his body so lank, and his legs so thin, and his nose so beaked, that it was conceded by all that he was the most unique knight of the bell-tower that ever tolled a bell or a lie, and, while it was easy to measure his person at a glance, a lifetime would not suffice to secure the dimensions of his character.

Thus we find in this quaint little town two queer men, burdened with odd names which came from a strange immemorial usage. It was a fad in this and adjoining regions to christen babies in harmony with birth conditions. If the birth was without accident the infant was named "Good Luck," or "Free-born," or "Happy." If delay occurred, it was called "Tardy," or "Slocum," or

"Waity," and sometimes "Putoff"; if twins appeared the first was christened "Ante" and the other "Post"; but if, by chance, triplets came, the last was called "Triple," or "Trip" for short.

It is a therapeutic fact, known to medical practitioners, that in the event of twins the first child born is endowed with a patient nature, but, if triplets come, the second will be irritable, while the third will have a morose character. Be this as it may, one thing is certain, baby Hoback preceded a twin brother and was named "Ante," while baby Topper, being the last of a group of triplets, was named "Triple"; and as you follow these freak productions of human love through this narrative it will be made plain that the opinion of the medical fraternity is fully sustained concerning the influence of birth conditions on the character and temper of men.

As Ante Hoback grew to manhood he became a person of parts, and one of the largest of these was his controversial trend. He would argue anything with anybody, at any time or place, sacred or profane, whether they had a spare moment or not; and, if they beat him in the argument, he would abruptly close the debate with, "So 's your sis-

ter," "Which way did the cow kick you," "Ain't it queer that one-half the world like Johnny-cake and t'other half don't," and other classic terms, and then would bolt the conference as fast as his duck-legs could waddle, shouting "*Au reservoir, spater, peut-etre, if not later,*" which he thought he had learned from the French.

Hoback and Topper were old bachelors, Ante because of a first-love disappointment, Triple for the reason that he did not have red blood enough in his veins to love any woman; in fact, there was less sentiment in his heart than there is in the differential calculus, for he believed that women should be taken in homeopathic doses, and well shaken at that.

Hoback's case was pathetic, and won sympathy for him among those who knew the story. When young he visited a village where he fell in love with a pretty girl, and the passion seemed mutual. He soon found employment in the place, and to facilitate their meeting the maiden would raise a curtain in a certain window of her home as a signal that Ante would find her in, and glad to receive him. Many happy hours came to him through this signal system, and that window was, until his death, the most attractive spot

to him on earth, excepting, of course, the sofa in the back parlor.

In the course of time young Hoback was dismayed to learn that his sweetheart had run away with and married a handsomer man. The blow broke his heart into such a multitude of pieces that it never would mend, and yet, so deep was his love for the little traitor, he remained in that town until he died, and every day, in fair and in foul weather, he passed that house, gazed at the signal window, and reveled in the memory of the days that were gone, which proves as sure as one and two make twelve, that only one true love ever comes to man, all others being watered sentiment. "I believe," said Ante one day to a confidant, "that in after life the soul can only become immortal through the trials of love, which is the greatest thing on earth; but it must be confined to one love." It is reasonable to think that the Deacon never believed in the modern theory that to be faithful to one woman is unfair to all the rest, for he remained single the rest of his days without any other love so far as the world knew, and it is fortunate that the world does not know everything. If it did the area of gossip would be uncomfortably enlarged.

To be fairly truthful, the treachery of the

girl did not make Ante a drunkard, or a fool, nor did it prevent him from becoming a very poor deacon. He plunged into spiritual activity and reached the deaconship early; but some avowed that he was drowning his grief in religious excitement as other people drown theirs in strong drink. Be this as it may, no one denied that a church function without Hoback was worse than a yawl without a rudder, for he was a steering committee of one, and he steered things his own way so long that it seemed like beating the air to question his course or the accuracy of his reckonings. This was natural, for in every community there is an all-round man in each church circle who does things, and he is called the "Hustler" or the "Busy Angel," and Ante was worthy of both these titles. He even considered himself the Atlas of his church, and in a way he was, for on his round shoulders rested a world of trouble and work. In truth, he was so active religiously that it was a mystery he was not a better man.

The likes and dislikes of Deacon Hoback were the most powerful things about him except his wigs, of which, Topper claimed, he had two of different shades, a dead-red one for funerals, and a live-red one for weddings. As for his benevolence, he had lots of it, but

not enough to open a fight with prayer, or hold an umbrella over a fish in a shower; but it was enough to make him mellow at times. During picnics he showed himself to be a man of some soul. He would take a "heart-rending cup of tea" or a "sublime lemonade" without urging, still he was temperate; but you could not have proved it by the color of his nose. He never liked caucuses, cornhuskings, or town-meetings; but weddings, baptisms, and funerals were his delight. They got into his heart, as it were, and circulated with his blood, and his absence from them almost created a panic in the church. This sentiment, however, was confined to his own flock; men of other denominations never considered him as sweet as a lost bargain; still, he averaged well for a "Busy Angel" doing miscellaneous stunts in a quaint old town.

It is but just to record that there were some things Hoback would not do. He never honey-fuddled openly with profane things. He never was fuddled with beer, nor muddled with hard cider, but he could, and every winter morning did, roll up and swallow twenty-six buckwheat cakes in fifteen minutes, and then stand the rest of the hour, with hands folded under his coat-tails, backed up

to the kitchen fire, listening to the rumbling music of the pancakes as they slowly unrolled.

With such a disposition it is not strange that the Deacon seldom growled at public abuses, or moaned over the evils of the times unless they appeared in his own church and were not of his own creation. He never acted as peacemaker in street brawls. Not, as Topper said, because he feared bodily harm; but he figured it out in this way: that if the brawlers kept busy until one or the other got enough, it would preclude the chance of another row between the same parties, and thus reduce the probability of a disturbance of the public peace by one. He avoided pole-raising, political meetings, barbecues, and things of like nature, because he abhorred any function that did not begin with prayer and end with a benediction. As for receptions, with collations, he said they were functions to which people would "come, gaze, gulp, go, and growl," and he never attended them. Circuses, dances, pink-teas and theatres were, in his opinion, things which the Devil used to pull people away from religious work. The "church supper" he opposed on the very solid ground that trying to make money by giving two hundred hungry beings two hundred dollars' worth of

food at twenty-five cents a head is quite as insane as fastening a life preserver to your heels in a shipwreck and expecting to swim.

Foreign missions he opposed with might and main. To every one of them he had a stout objection, and in this he made the devoted minister, whose meager salary was usually six months in arrears, and who was compelled by the program of the church to urge liberal contributions to the foreign mission fund, feel embarrassed and disturbed. "I'm for the American heathen first, last, and every time," the Deacon would say when asked to contribute. "Is there not," said he, "an army of unredeemed in our town, including Topper, and is there not an interest-eating mortgage on our own church? Whyfor, therefore, should we contribute to save far-away devils when we have a surplus needing salvation at home?"

In a measure the Deacon's opposition arose from the fact that a missionary preached a special collection sermon in his church one Sunday, during which he stated that, while building a beautiful chapel near Calcutta for the use of a handful of converts, a poor half caste, dazed with religious excitement, contributed the wages of a year to the enterprise, thus robbing a wife and five

children of the necessities of life, and the promoters accepted the gift as eagerly as if it had come from an opulent heathen prince. This revelation spoiled what little stomach the Deacon had for foreign missions, and, ever after, he delighted in relating how, when the plate was once passed for the foreign mission fund, a stranger dropped a five-cent piece upon it saying, "There's a nickel for the heathen," and then dropping a five-dollar gold piece after it, shouted in a loud voice, "and there's five dollars to get it to them!"

Ante Hoback had a regular home, but no regular employment. His household consisted of himself, his housekeeper, Miss Sally, her bunions, and a yellow cat. While he had no regular employment, he could, and would, do anything, or anybody, as occasion permitted. He divided his time between church functions and odd jobs, the odder the better. If there was a back yard to clean, no one was thought of but Ante. If carpets needed dusting, he would beat them until the last microbe flew like air. If there was wood to saw, no one could saw it quicker, or pile it snugger. If a garden had to be hoed, he would hoe it until he tore up the last tare by the roots. Topper went so far as to say that Hoback would hoe other people's potatoes, weed them, dig them

and—take a lot home if he got a chance. When he worked by the day he charged one dollar in addition to any perquisites that lay around loose; but if he worked by the job, he calculated to make two dollars a day with or without taking things that were not nailed fast. Nor should it be forgotten that he was the best all-round nurse in that nook of the earth, and as he had won fame in this field of human succor he was able to make both ends touch, being “providentially aided,” as he often said, by several epidemics which visited the sewerless town from time to time.

And Ante Hoback wrought in other things. If the organ pump-boy of the church played truant, he would work the pump so vigorously the organist often remarked that the wind he produced had a quaver and triumphant cadence seldom equaled, while the supply was ample for the most prolonged effort. Upon hearing this commendation Topper announced that it was natural, because Hoback was a boundless wind-bag himself. But Topper also had the church-job hunger, and no one gave his envious remark half a thought.

At times the Deacon would occupy the pulpit in the absence of the minister, and read selected sermons which Topper said “sounded well if you couldn’t hear them,” but if you

did, they had the effect of "soporific compounds administered through the ear." Upon such occasions there was a surplus of meeting, for the Deacon would discourse with a solemnity that caused strangers, who remained awake, to glance furtively about for the corpse. When a choir member was ill, Ante would try to fill the gap with his hurdy-gurdy voice; but fastidious members, abetted by Topper, insisted that he simply snored verse-music, and that, while swans sing before they die, the Deacon ought to have reversed the habit.

As plate-passer he displayed a talent no one but Topper had heart to deny. He woke up nappers by prodding them under the ear with the contribution-box in a gentle way that proved lucrative, and he considered it one of his great achievements that no drowsy pew-sitter had ever escaped paying for his lodgings.

Ante was ill one Sunday and Topper was asked to pass the plate, which he did all over the church and back again. But when the Deacon heard that the collection returns showed a total of only one dollar and fifteen cents, he cried, "That man will make me lose my religion," and then rolled out of his sick-bed, put on his dead-red wig and hurried

straightway to the parson, informing him, with all the agitation his body would hold, that as the amount was forty per cent. below the smallest collection of record, either Topper had overlooked a lot of pew-nappers, or the deficit had been created by him in a moment of abstraction, and he himself favored the latter conclusion. It was the last appearance of Topper as plate-passer in that church.

In short, if these men had business together, especially church business, the buckle-and-tongue ends of good-will never met, for a stream of mutual undervaluation flowed ever between them, and there was always space enough left for a brabble. Harmony between them was impossible. They resembled a cat and dog, which, reposing on opposite sides of a fireplace, dream hours away in peace, but, if they occupy the same side, instantly there is a whirr and caterwaul that loads the air with fur and fierce discordant noises. So it was with these men. Apart, they were peaceable, but if they came together in any phase of church work, concord stood as much chance in that combine as a snowball does in the Devil's summer-garden.

It is reluctantly recorded, in support of this assertion, that upon one occasion Topper invaded Hoback's funeral domain by assist-

ing the undertaker to "lower the remains," a thing the Deacon had been doing for twenty years. Upon returning from the cemetery a collision occurred in the public highway head on. The Deacon, it is said:

Pulled down his wig, and raised his stick,
And assumed a war-like air.
Then approached the guilty sexton,
With a grim and grisly stare,
Tried to walk straight through him,
As though he wasn't there.

But he didn't. He ran into a bunch of skin and bones, and paused for breath. In the collision his hat and dead-red wig were knocked off, and, grabbing the wig, he clapped it on wrong side up, which brought a roar of laughter from the bystanders and a lull in the fight. This gave Topper a chance to side-step from the field of battle, which he did in high daddy, whistling the Deacon's favorite dead march. The latter had half a mind to chase after the sexton at once, but the other half was more powerful, and helped him to wait until Topper got too far to be overtaken, then he started slowly toward him, crying, "You're a madam bad man, Mr. Topper, and after I die you'll never see my face again for I'm going to heaven." When

he had voiced his mind, he turned back muttering:

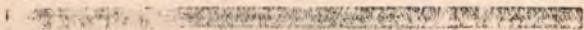
"Flies on sugar alighting,
Cease their hum,
And Toppers in office,
Soon grow bum."

Such scenes were not rare, but they were always distressing to some members, who felt that if they continued they would gravely harm the church, and constant efforts were made to bring the belligerents within the sphere of concord. But it was like trying to mix oil with water, or religion with politics. Both had big sticks in pickle for each other, and they were used on all occasions. So these men wrangled on, making the temple of love and goodwill their cockpit and their church work the basis of strife.

How Hoback and Topper maintained their hold on the congregation sufficient to retain their positions was a mystery to thoughtful men. To be sure there was in this circle, as there is in every circle, a class born to be hocus-pocused by religious as well as profane frauds. This species appeared inordinately large in this particular church. They seemed to realize, and that was quite enough for them, that Hoback held all of the positions

in the church except the pastorship and Topper's job, and, as far as they were capable of judging, he possessed a wider knowledge of the Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalyptic Vision, than any other man, and as for hell, he could describe it with the fullness and accuracy of a German topographical map. Among those who drifted along on the mental diet of mechanical prayers and wordy orthodoxy there was the belief that when Ante died and went to heaven—no other place was thought of—he would ask for and take the nearest way to the throne. His educational moans at funerals, and high-jinks at weddings, filled them with equal amounts of sorrow and delight. It was a hopeful sign, however, that when he told of modern miracles he had seen "with his own eyes" as comparative proof that biblical miracles were not myths, there were some persons in the church well-done enough to question his narratives, and even insinuated that if the Deacon were ever caught in the society of Ananias and his lady Sapphira, there would be three of a kind and all would feel at home.

During sermons, that were at times a mixture of sulphur and balm of Gilead, his admirers would keep an eye on him, and noticed



that any attempt of the parson's to let down long enough to be liberal on foreordination or infant baptism would throw Hoback into the dumps all that day and often until the next Sunday. He was an orthodox fanatic. Theological dogmatism was his base of supply. All the stories of old-time religious cruelty, its tortures and burning of witches and everything ultra-orthodoxy taught as divine retribution, he believed in and firmly approved. Some of his prayers were grotesque and had a tinge of ribaldry, but they were heard with composure and some amens. When he prayed, "O Lord, come down upon us with all Your might and main, come right down through the chimney, Topper will keep the fire low," a murmur of approval came from the half-done members, and when he said, "O Lord, chase the Devil off the earth and chuck him in his fiery berth," even some of the well-done members seemed impressed. Sometimes he would claim that all the sacred promises were made to his church alone, and all outside of it had no part in God's plan of salvation. He denounced the most harmless church amusements, and members who participated in them were forever lost. He was hide-bound in his convictions and heart-hard in follow-

ing them, and yet there were many in his little church who tolerated him, and some who were touched with admiration.

The truth is, some of the ignorant and thoughtless ones had such an opinion of Hoback's greatness that in an effort to comprehend the mysteries of creation, and locate the Creator, their bewildered minds would drift back to the beginning of time; but think hard as they could, they never got beyond the august person of the Deacon, who seemed to have been at the beginning and had more to do with making things begin than any one else. Thus, Hoback and Creation were synonymous terms with them. To look upon him was to them a university course, and to hear him discuss the shortcomings of man, especially of Topper, and the mysteries of miracles, was an A. M., A. B., Ph. D., and D. D. all in one. Their opinion of him was like an amateur's notion about chickens. He will take one rooster, two hens, a pencil and a piece of paper, and figure himself into a bank president in ten minutes. They took the Deacon's success at plate-passing and pall-bearing, together with his supposed knowledge of divine things, and, multiplying them by the positions he held in the church, the result

gave Ante a reserved seat in heaven without the formalities of death and a funeral, any time he cared to take possession.

Some mortals are frail vessels indeed. Appearances go a long way. Every person with a sanctimonious air is, to them, as good on the inside as on the out. They do not realize that pious fuss and feathers may signify nothing but fuss and feathers. They are not aware that wise distrust will safeguard men from wrong; that skill in judging men comes slow, and time flies fast, while knowledge necessary to the detection of sham often matures too late, and so they amble through life in a passive mood. So did these people drift along, leaving the administration of the church with Hoback and Topper, neither of whom possessed the fragment of an idea as to the sacredness of their trusts, or the true spirit in which they should be discharged.

To understand Ante Hoback, who, with all his weakness, is our hero, it may be well to study his character a little more. He was superstitious to a degree that proves he was strong in some of the human weaknesses. If a bird flew in a northerly direction before sunrise, or a duck quacked loudly at the early rising moon, it portended death to some

member of the church, and forewarned him of pall-bearing possibilities. If he met a cross-eyed man on the street he would sidestep and spit over his right shoulder. If he passed a cross-eyed woman, he would hurry to the curb and spit over his left shoulder three times. If he saw the new moon over his left shoulder he would stop the first man, woman, or child, and urge that individual to look at it over his or her right shoulder and thus neutralize the effect, otherwise he would have been unlucky during the change of four tides. He never passed salt to any one, for that broke friendship beyond mending, and once he insisted that an old lady who had asked him to dine where thirteen were at the board, should wake up a sleeping grand-child and place it at the table to break the fatal number.

He coughed four times when entering a house, as something might be doing he ought not to see, and he knocked three times on wood whenever he said he felt well for fear he might feel worse. As for being moved from one place to another after death, he said, "If I die away from home, don't ship me back for burial, for I never like to dead-head it."

One characteristic made for Ante's noto-

riety beyond the town in which he lived. He was cyclopedic on burials and possessed an overweening fondness for funerals. He seemed to have contracted an active partnership with death and the undertaker, and, in that sewerless town, they supplied him with ample resources. At burial rites he apparently held in his heart the sorrows of all the bereaved. It was at these functions that he heaved every sigh and shed every tear in his little round body, and often he reminded one of the Bridge of Sighs. He would whisper in such mournful tones and sob in such measureless amounts that the domain of the dead seemed his in fee simple. He would weep copiously over the remains of an entire stranger, and, if a member of the church was dead, he would make such soluble use of his eyes that some thought he had a surplus of water on the brain which helped his pall-bearing mania to create brain-storms that were at times woefully wet. His appetite for sorrowful excitement was whetted to such an edge that he might as well have tried to turn a rusty screw with a feather as to have attempted foregoing the pleasures of the dead-house. He could no more refrain from anything in this line than boys can abstain from chasing a brass band.

And Deacon Hoback had other "Busy Angel" qualities of no mean proportions. Topper insisted that every day the Deacon absorbed "potion after potion" of an elixir he called "strenuine" in order to increase his strenuosity; but no analysis was ever made of the liquid, because the circle in which he moved had no interest in the result. All they cared for was to see Ante on deck ready for church functions on Sunday and odd jobs during the week days, even if he did suffer now and then from a swollen latch-key in the evening.

His strenuous life was ever apparent. If the minister were absent, he filled the pulpit, and it was upon these occasions that Triple Topper had his special innings. If the day was cold he would slow the fire in the stove that warmed the pulpit-end of the sanctuary so the Deacon had to keep on his top-coat until he reached a point in the sermon where the circulation got active. If a thaw was on he would encourage the stove to a red-hot activity that cruelly wasted a large amount of Hoback perspiration. At such times even those in the back pews observed that Ante's thoughts were for war, but he buttoned up his resentment, which, if vented, would have poured a volley of rhetoric at the head of

Triple Topper that would have given him all kinds of astronomical visions and a few things besides. This state of things could not endure always and a day of reckoning was at hand.

It was the duty of Topper, as sexton, to ring the bell at twelve sharp to call the Sunday-school together at close of the regular service. He performed this task with such uncomfortable punctilio, that if the Deacon was long on benediction, as he was prone to be, his words were drowned in the clamor and he was forced to cut it short to prevent the banging from smothering his voice in the final wind up.

It is a matter of local history about which people gossip to this very day, that upon three occasions Topper banged the bell in triple bob-majors just in time to overwhelm a large part of the benediction with paroxysms of alarum. But the third time he rode his vicious hobby to a fall, for when the first twang smothered the noise the Deacon was making, he stopped short, listened for ten seconds as if his soul had taken off its hat, then flinging an outraged glance at the belfry, picked up his Sunday beaver and waddled toward the entrance to the steeple, taking with him his big hickory stick. Sublunary

things seemed at an end for the sexton and some of the congregation hoped he was ready for the approaching doxology. Justice may have traveled with bandy-legs, but she struck with a bludgeoned hand.

Whether Hoback entered the belfry to end the benediction, or the sexton, is a mystery. One thing is certain, something happened, for even those half deaf heard noises in the bell-tower like sounds issuing from a painful accident. For a time the pew sitters were awed and silence reigned in the little church. Then suddenly from the steeple entrance came the Deacon, with his chest dilating, while upon his red wig victory was perched in a most disorderly manner. His Sunday beaver, crownless and crumpled, was in one hand, and in the other was the big stick, while, at a respectful distance, the sexton followed, with nerves all gone to smithers, looking like a rat that had just seen a cat.

The dignity of the church had been vindicated. Topper's bell-whanging mania had unchained a catastrophe which sent him home to a horizon of suffering and discontent, and, needless to say, most of the churchgoers were secretly delighted.

Only once before, in his connection with this church, had Topper been so hard

pressed. It was Christmas time. The old housekeeper of the Deacon, Miss Sally, had gone to glory, or otherwise, and, soon after she was housed in God's acre, the Deacon ordered a rose wreath to be sent to the grave, bearing the inscription "In loving remembrance." By mistake the florist sent a wreath for some Christmas festival to Topper's house, with a note saying it was for Miss Sally's grave. This was an opportunity for the sexton to show his love for the Deacon. He started at once for the cemetery and laid the Christmas wreath on Miss Sally's grave. The next morning Ante strolled over to the place to see if his floral tribute had been delivered, and he was dumbfounded to find a garland of holly with the legend "A Merry Christmas to You" on the tomb. Within one short hour he discovered the culprit. The conference lasted less than three minutes, and while both men were in need of a surgeon at the finish, it was Topper who required a hospital.

Thus, from time to time, the Hoback-Topper Feud dispelled the dullness of the day, bringing gayety to the town and much distress to the church. While many deplored the strife, others enjoyed the Donnybrook Fair, especially when both naggers were able

to raise a lot of that article whose existence Robert Ingersoll doubted while he was alive. Notwithstanding these profane antics, Topper still held his place, and Hoback retained his grasp on church functions, which in a way was not surprising, for had he not helped to build the church? Did he not fill nearly every official place in it? And was he not the moving spirit that fastened the interest-eating mortgage upon it to batten on its life and frighten prospective members away?

As for Topper, his family tree, according to Ante, was a very shady one. He was an interloper from the back country. He wandered into the town years after Hoback became Deacon, and won the sextonship after a bitter contest, in which Ante opposed him on the very good ground that he could take care of the place himself.

When Topper arrived in the quiet hamlet it was soon discovered that he brought with him three titles, "Colonel," "Doctor," and "Honorable," and he exposed them to the people whenever he got a chance. Of their validity no one was more skeptical than Hoback, who, upon investigation, a business at which he was no tyro, reported that "Colonel" arose from the fact that Topper took a car-load of discarded army mules into Vir-

ginia after the close of the Civil War and sold them to the colored farmers at a fat profit, for which kindness they dubbed him "Colonel."

The title of "Doctor" was quite as easily obtained. One day he explained the efficacy of hot water on the human stomach to a dyspeptic old maid, telling her that married people did not need it, because they were always in it; but for maiden ladies it was a famous remedy, as it had the same power of "cleaning the inside of their inwards that it has of removing greasy substances from soup-plates," and the maiden lady, being impressed with his medical knowledge, greeted him as "Doctor," which title he at once assumed.

It was the title of "Honorable" that puzzled Hoback the most. He could not understand how a man of Topper's turpitude had any right in such company; but finally he discovered the origin of the "epithet," as he termed it, and he voiced his discovery with ardor whenever he had an audience.

Hoback claimed that Topper used the title because he once came near breaking into the State Legislature by a trick which he played on the dear people when he secured the nomination. At this period Topper was almost

unknown, but, by some hocus-pocus in politics, he was sent to the convention as a delegate. On the night of the nomination he hired a band and marched it all over the town until a motley crowd fell into line, among whom were a number of country delegates. Under the guide of a paid heeler the paraders were steered to Topper's hotel for the open purpose of giving him a serenade, but for the covert purpose of booming him for the legislature. It was claimed by the Deacon, and his veracity was not always flexible, that Topper, who could no more make a speech than a dusty old dodo, had imported a clever orator to impersonate him when he was called out to make a few remarks, as had been prearranged.

The night was very dark; no lights were in the streets, and the dingy balcony projecting from Topper's room was darker than the night, making it a safe spot for the trick he was about to play. When the paraders, led on by paid heelers, began to cry for Topper, he quietly pushed his oratorical substitute onto the dark balcony and turned him loose on the unsuspecting crowd. It was a memorable thirty minutes in the history of that place. The oldest inhabitants had never heard so much rhetoric huddled into a short

half hour, and when the orator, in closing his peroration, announced that he had decided to be a candidate for the legislature, tremendous cheering followed and the entire mob bolted pell-mell to the convention hall and forced the nomination of Topper on the first ballot.

The political career of Topper ended, however, on election night, for the people, who won't be bamboozled always, learning of his trick, buried him under such a landslide of ballots that his reputation was submerged in that community, and he soon departed to invade the religious domain so long occupied by Ante Hoback.

There was as much difference between these two men as there is between green old age and ripe old age, and this was made plain the hour they met in the arena of church work. The sexton could do less labor in more time than the Deacon. Topper believed that toil was an old-fashioned way of getting a living and that very little of it should be done between meals. Work annoyed him. He did not like it, and the throne of laziness, the sextonship, being vacant, he fell into it, not as easily as old Silas Wegg, with his peg-leg, fell into poetry, but with ease enough in spite of the Deacon, who

ever after insisted that Topper was such a vegetator that he had moss on his nose. His head was so hard that whenever the Deacon beat it with his hickory cudgel, which was not infrequently, it beat the cudgel back again; and, as for his heart, it was as dry as the summer's dust. He did not know what reconciliation meant, and would rub out sore spots with a brick. He was not only morose from birth, but pessimistic, and if by chance he had a choice between two evils, he chose both, and usually kept the larger one for the Deacon. If his entire anatomy had been constructed in proportion to what he said to what he did, there would have been little of him but his mouth. If by accident he smiled at a wedding, he felt ashamed of it; if he shed a tear at a funeral, it was owing to the weakness of the water duct of his left eye which gave him the appearance of perpetual weeping. He was not entirely godless, but his god was hatred and envy of the Deacon. He would get up early any morning to hurl tirades at him and tell people of the mistakes he had made. Once Ante claimed that he was a self-made man, whereupon Topper added, "And he worships his maker." The jeremiads that Topper handed out to Hoback were numberless. At a church supper

he said that Ante ate fish for brain food, but that it was a shameful waste of phosphor; and when the Deacon opposed the introduction of a patent cremating machine into the church cemetery Topper said it was because the Deacon didn't want to be burned twice. When Hoback heard of this he said, so every body could hear it, "Fools have flashes of sense which seem like intuition, but ever and anon one is born who is such an idiot that it proves brainless men may live"—and, with a suggestive glance toward Topper's house, he added—"in this community."

If the ladies of the church called the Deacon "the salt of the earth," which they often did, Topper would add, "And the pepper of our church, and a red-headed pepper too." Once, in a moment of supreme testiness, he said, "The reason Ante is so reckless with his character is because he has nothing to lose but his breath, and it would be an improvement if he sent that out with his weekly wash." When the Deacon was once defending some of his acts against criticism, he insisted that he was the guardian of his own honor, and Topper, hearing the assertion, said, "Oh, Lord, what an easy job!" He even contended that when he, Topper, did anything of value for the church, Ho-

back would climb on to the poop deck of publicity and shout, "I did it, I did it." But Topper forgot that this is a common weakness among men.

In one of his outbursts he proclaimed that Ante thought around things and never into them, and was therefore about as correct as a gas meter when he tried to give facts. On one occasion, when he had a good street audience, he said, "Every community has men who resemble fish. The boastful are the wide-mouth bass; the stupid are the bullheads; the mud-slingers are the carp; the borrowers are the suckers; the pirates are the sharks, the most selfish of all fish, and of this species Ante Hoback is a land shark of no mean proportions," and to prove this he related the following remarkable dream of Ante's selfishness, which he claimed to have had after one of his encounters with the Deacon:

"I dreamed," said Topper, "that the world came suddenly to an end, catching, as such an event is sure to do, a large majority unprepared. It was announced, upon good authority, that twenty-four hours would be allowed in which to secure a trip to glory, at the expiration of which time all skyward transportation would be at an end. The de-

mand for aërial wafture was stupendous. Such a clamoring of tongues and hurrying hither and thither was never seen before. The bosom of mother earth was restless and flushed with agitation. There was a rough-and-tumble scramble for transportation that dimmed the antics of the graftiest legislature. Heavenly elevators were in great demand and hard to get. All were on the rush and in the push. Everybody got in the way of somebody, and nobody got out of the way of anybody. No one asked anybody to ride and no one helped any one to catch on. Every human thing was agog. Some scurried after argosies that had just left. Others grabbed at air galleons about to start. Men who had never moved faster than a walk ran because they could not fly. Women who had not been able to sit up and take notice for months were out for a ride. Daughters who had always waited for mother to do things had no time to wait for mother now. All were in paroxysms of alarm and universal hubbub reigned. How to get there was the main thing and modesty retired. Some ascended in balloons, some in aëroplanes, some in Maxim kites and Lilienthal birds, some in Bell air-motors, and others climbed golden ladders that were lowered from the sky. The

air was alive with flying things, among which was an airship constructed on a modified orthodox plan, and on board could be seen the members of five different denominations, all willing to be saved in the same way, and all anxious to go to glory by the same route, but it took an awful crisis to bring it about.

"In the storm center of this wild tumult," continued Topper, "I stood helpless and dazed. If I chanced a ride on anything some selfish mortal pushed in and cut me out. In all that hurrying host there was no glad hand to help and no kind voice to cheer. All were anxious to get ahead, believing the Devil would get the hindmost. Repulsed in my efforts to obtain passage, even with my friends, and conscious that the end of the allotted time was near, I stood dumfounded at the utter selfishness of man. Chagrined at this discovery, and sick with fear of approaching doom, I glanced anxiously about, and there, to my amazement, was Ante Hoback, his face blasted with antiquity, clinging to the car of a bursted balloon and singing, in a scared voice, 'Oh what shall I do to be saved?'

"Could such a thing be real? thought I. Is this dismayed creature the paragon of our

church? Is this the mighty pallbearer, the strenuous knight of the plate-passers, the potentate of odd jobs; the man who some half-done mortals believed would escape the formalities of death by being translated in a chariot of fire? For a moment the spectacle staggered me. I knew he was getting what was coming to him, and yet a quaver of pity came over me, as I turned from that woeful sight to see if there was still a chance to ascend. Alas, all communications were suspended. Every one had disappeared except the Deacon and myself.

"‘Some men,’" Topper went on, and he was no fool with quotations, "‘do not know their own greatness until an emergency arises. Others never realize their smallness until they stand face to face with a great crisis.’ Hoback had found his level in the crucial moment and was sinking in utter helplessness. ‘Is it possible,’ said I, half aloud, ‘that this miracle-seer possesses no divine means of transportation—this man who talked and acted as if he were at the beginning of things and helped things to begin? Is it possible that he is to be lost in the grand closing out when so many indifferent souls are to be saved?’ For the first time in my life a lump of sympathy for the Deacon

arose from my heart and choked my throat.

"At this moment, solemn and awful in its intensity, a thoughtful angel lowered a golden rope to the earth just where I stood—a mighty good shot for a cherub. I seized it and turned to see if Ante had been likewise blessed. A lack-a-day! There he lay, clinging to his shattered balloon, his dinky old beaver gone, his wig topsy-turvey on the ground, his body quaking with fear, while his whiffling voice was still crying, 'Oh, what shall I do to be saved?'

"Things looked gloomy enough for the Deacon, and again I began to feel mellow, but something said to me, 'Sexton, you've met that man before, he's uncertain, you'd better look out for the main chance.' So I clutched the golden rope tight and cried, 'Hoist away,' and as the angels began to lift me to glory, I turned with curiosity toward Ante. There he was, the mighty absorber of church jobs, hugging his wrecked and useless balloon, and still wailing, 'Oh, what shall I do to be saved?' It was the acme of pathos, the most piteous sight I ever saw, and I weakened enough to shout, 'Hi there, Deacon! here's your last chance; hurry up and catch on.'

"I was well acquainted with the old sin-

ner, but he gave me something new to think about. Never has a pail of hot water moved a gopher out of his hole quicker than the sound of my voice and the sight of that rope brought the Deacon to his feet. With a shout of joy he rushed to the spot, grabbed my heels, and jerking me loose from the rope, seized it, and as I landed on my back I looked up and saw Hoback swinging swiftly toward the bowers of bliss, singing, 'Now I can read my title clear to mansions in the sky,' and the far-away voices of the angels, murmuring reproaches at the selfish deed, aroused me from my dream."

So Topper mouthed along about the Deacon whenever he got a listener. He was always ready to give even a small boy a piece of mind upon this subject, and, no matter how many pieces he gave during the week, he had a good supply for Sundays. He was really fixing for the Deacon to perform the anaconda trick of swallowing a sexton, but he did not realize the situation.

Ante Hoback, viewed in any direction from the Topper standpoint, was a bad man. But this was not so to a small, yet redeeming, extent. Ante had his ways, but they were his by nature, and he never encouraged any interference with them. He claimed, among

other things, two inalienable rights, growing out of his long connection with the church, pallbearing and plate-passing, and in this he was an ego-maniac. He thought no one could perform these functions as he could, and the members, unable to arouse themselves to the true interests of the church, thought the same simply because it was the easiest way, and thus left him in possession of his hobbies for many years. Upon one occasion he resented an invasion of his pallbearing rights with so much vigor that it became a town topic for some time. It seems that Topper, in conspiracy with some of the anti-Hoback crowd in the church, attempted to usurp this right by supervising the funeral of a choir member, in which arrangement the Deacon was not chosen as one of the pallbearers; but he made it so uncomfortable for the mourners, as well as for the undertaker and the poor parson, that all were glad to give way and let him occupy his accustomed place at the head end, and on the right side of the corpse. Topper was at the bottom of this conspiracy; in fact, he was the only person who ever openly attempted to thwart the Deacon in the exercise of this inalienable right. He did it with a hatred, characteristic of all his relations with the

Deacon, that none could fathom, and with a persistency that hurt the church and disturbed its concord. At last this enmity took a sharp turn for the worse, and Topper's moroseness became suddenly so intense that he locked up the bell-tower, remained at home and refused to ring the bell or produce the key, and all were puzzled as to the real cause.

Finally the mystery of this increased hatred was solved. In a confiding moment, and under the ban of secrecy, Topper, in the seclusion of his home, made a statement to the dunder-pated organ pump-boy. From this confidential statement, which the pump-boy, at the earliest moment, confided to the organist, who transmitted it to the choir, who delivered it to the congregation, who immediately consigned it to the town, it appears that Topper, in the days of prosperity, either from platonic love, or the real thing, gave to a young widow a promissory note for several hundred dollars, upon which he was to pay interest semi-annually, with the understanding that, at the death of either party, the note was to become null and void. But the note did not contain this provision, and, as the young widow had room in her heart for a battalion of boys, the omission proved disastrous for the sexton.

For several years Topper kept up the interest and the company of the widow, little dreaming that Hoback had secretly staked a claim on the same property. One day the widow died suddenly, leaving a last will and testament. When the document was opened, in the presence of Topper and the beneficiaries, it was found that Ante Hoback, who was supposed to be a mere acquaintance of the widow, had not only been named as sole executor of the will without bond, but was made legatee of the Topper note in payment for services as administrator of the estate.

Triple Topper, with a quarter of a chance, in that distressful moment, would have climbed on to the throne of Jupiter and hurled thunderbolts at anything in sight. But his temper was sweet in quality and small in quantity to what it was when the conference ended and the beneficiaries had departed, for then, to his amazement, he discovered that Hoback had not only gone off with the promissory note, but had prigged Topper's new cylinder and left his dinky old beaver in its stead. It is said that the sexton looked twenty years older in a minute, and muttered, "If High Heaven should omit the day of Judgment, it would be a lucky thing

for Hoback and the widow," and then he wandered, half dazed, out into the street and went sadly home after locking the bell-tower. The blow was too much for Triple Topper. He sank rapidly under the shock, from which he never recovered.

A few months after the perfidy of the widow was revealed, the old sexton, to the relief of many, "fell asleep," by a red flash of apoplexy. He woke up in the next world,—no matter which,—leaving a suit of homespun, two chairs, one bedstead, one plate, one knife, one fork, one cup, one tea-kettle, one coffee-pot, and a will, written by his own hand and witnessed by the half-witted organ pump-boy and the parson, who seemed to have been his only confidants. The would-be heirs, impatient to learn the worst, as most expectant heirs are wont to be, were delighted to find that the sexton had endorsed the following words on the envelope containing the will:

"To be opened before I am put to bed with a shovel."

It was opened and paragraph first said: "To Willie Williams, the organ-blower, I give all of my household effects, except my old clothes; these I leave, with my sympathetic regards, to Domine Sadson, who has

an unspeakable deacon to deal with from day to day, and all day Sunday."

The second paragraph read:

"Being unmarried and consequently of sound mind, and knowing what I want, I express in this, my last will, a special wish to wit: Under no circumstances shall Ante Hoback attend my funeral, either in person or by proxy. For two-and-twenty years this adulterated religionist has, in and out of church, declared that no funeral had taken place, no funeral could take place, and no corpse could pass through our church to God's acre without his personal aid and supervision as long as he could work his lungs and walk. Therefore, by this, my last will, I desire to prove that the funeral of Triple Topper can take place, and the bones of Triple Topper can pass through our church to God's acre without the aid of Ante-Up Hoback, either in person or by proxy, or any other way."

For the first time in the history of his deaconship the pall-bearing rights of Ante Hoback were successfully denied, and he regarded a breach of the third commandment as hardly a balm strong enough for such a bruise. A friend from the back country met him just after the will was read, and hearing

for the first time of Topper's death, asked, "What was the complaint?" and Hoback grimly replied, "Don't know for sure, but whatever it was the disease was danged well employed."

Ante Hoback felt the blow struck at his inalienable rights from the top of his red wig to the soles of his number tens. It was galling, and it crushed both the pride and the prerogative of the old man. Chafing under the indignity, and incensed by the indictment, he sold his lot in the church-yard in which Topper was buried to the worst sinner in town, and codiciled his will to the effect that, "Under no circumstances, not even an emergency, are my remains to be placed in the same cemetery with Topper's bones," and to make the matter sure, he bought a lot in a rival graveyard on the opposite side of the village and set up a little monument bearing these words:

"Here lies Deacon Ante Hoback, Born December 26, 1839, Died — after Triple Topper."

He had triumphed over the sexton by out-living him.

When Topper found a resting-place in that house "which lasts till doomsday," he left Hoback sole arbiter of church func-

tions, and Ante at once absorbed the sextonship, while a supine congregation, in its lethargy, tolerated him until the kindly but hapless parson, despairing of concord in the church, resigned to become a book agent, and the sheriff foreclosed the mortgage for a syndicate of worldly men who transformed the sacred temple into a theater, where "Tracy the Outlaw" and "The True Jesse James" and like plays were greeted from night to night with ardor, and gathered in, and removed from the town, a large amount of box receipts every year. Thus death and the sheriff ended the Hoback-Topper Feud and closed the portals of the building as a church forever.

God may forgive sins of high and low degree under certain prescribed conditions, but the sin of church discord may be beyond His mercy. Certainly the misdemeanor of it is reprehensible enough to place the culprits outside of the sphere of divine forgiveness, for men with a more handsome incompetence for uplifting work do not exist in any other field of human endeavor. The whole church atmosphere is tainted by their conduct, and their lives need fumigating with the odor of good-will and common sense. An evangeli-

cal bushwhacker like Topper, or a guerrilla lay brother like Hoback, are abscesses on the church body, and, if not cut out, will give the congregation a stud of nightmares in the end. Such church men seem to eat of the insane root that makes them imagine they are the light and life of the sanctuary, while, in truth, their performances are only dear to the gods of Sheol. They cause the little world around them to creak vilely on its hinges, for, as a rule, they are as disagreeable as the occasion will permit. In the presence of such sluggish livers and active spleens, the pulse of any religion will beat low. Loyal members within the church are repelled by these conditions, and thinking people without can never be reached while such things exist. A house cleaning must take place that will drive brabblers from the church as the money-changers were driven from the temple, before worthy devotees can begin that triumphant march which will lead to the salvation of the world.

How many churches there are which ought to be progressive, but are retarded in growth, and crippled in usefulness by internal feuds arising from meddlesome deacons, cat-and-dog sextons, pompous trustees, and wrangling communicants! The influence of

such mortals on the life of the church is as blighting as the shade of upas trees.

Bedeck the truth as we Christians may, the stolid fact remains, that, if men like Hoback and Topper are tolerated in the administration of the church, the Devil will occupy a front pew in the end. From these bickerings, sacred things and holy places sink into contempt. Feuds among officers or members of any religious denomination must breed disorder and bring the kindest religion in the world within the pale of reasonable criticism. The Temple of God is a harbor of peace and good-will, not the refuge of churlish men. It is a place where the atmosphere should soften and elevate. It is a "union of religious fellowship independent of, and different from, all other forms of human association." Harmony is its object, not animosity; concord its aim, not strife. In every community it is the badge of honor, and its true safety abides in the character and conduct of its members. If good-will and mutual helpfulness find a sanctuary in their hearts, the church will become a tower of strength. If factious strife develop, and feuds find root, the bell might as well hang silent in the belfry and the portals of the temple remain forever closed, for nothing

can equal or measure up to the evils of discord in holy places, where the benign precepts of the Saviour are taught, and where they should be supreme. Were it not for the vast army of noble and gracious souls, both laymen and clergy, who beautify the world by their worthy lives, the doom of the church would have been sounded long ago. Not by external foes, but by those who are stupidly active or indifferent within its sacred portals.

A DANDYMITE CLOCK AT THE WHITE HOUSE

AFTER graduating Jack Stanley went to the National Capital to finish his law studies, and in order to meet expenses he secured a position on a daily newspaper. One night, during the time he was employed as night editor, a reporter, laboring under excitement, rushed into his room and handed him a sheet of paper upon which was written, "I, Edwin B. Screvin, do hereby certify that the box containing the dynamite clock has been placed under the White House timed to explode at twelve o'clock to-night, for which I acknowledge receipt of \$500 paid to me, according to agreement, by the man in the red sweater."

"My brother was sitting in the reading room of Willard's Hotel this evening," said the reporter, "when a man entered, sat down at one of the tables and commenced writing. His nervous manner attracted my brother's attention, for he wrote something, read it, and then tore it up, then he took another sheet, wrote something hurriedly, read it, and instantly destroyed it. He wrote again,

looked it over, pushed the sheet aside, and it slipped under a newspaper that lay upon the table. He then took the fourth sheet, wrote again, read it over carefully, sealed it in an envelope and left the place apparently under marked excitement. My brother went to the table, lifted the newspaper, found this document, and gave it to me."

The managing editor was consulted, and instructed Jack to probe the affair to the bottom, as it was known that several letters containing threats and warnings had recently been received at the White House. A visit to the hotel proved that Screvin had registered there and taken a room in which was found the card of an anarchist suspect. Screvin had disappeared. Jack hastened to the White House, as it was nearing midnight, and presented the mysterious document to Marshal Sharpe, who read it carefully, stepped into the President's room, and returned in a moment with General Grant, who looked the document over, grimly smiled, and said that he did not think an investigation necessary, as he was used to such letters. "But," he said to the marshal, "whatever you do I would not like to have a sensational thing like this published in the newspapers." The marshal insisted on making an investigation

and the General smiled and said, "All right, do as you please; but if the dynamite goes off, don't go with it as I need you in my business."

The male personnel on duty was then summoned and ordered to make a careful search of the basement. It was a grim and gloomy place in those days. In one of the rooms an old messenger, who had made similar searches before, picked up, unnoticed, a small paper bag, inflated it with his breath, and just as a colored man, who was carrying a lantern, pushed over an empty wine cask, he exploded the bag. The lantern went one way and the colored man another, crying, "Lord o' mercy, dat dar dandymite clock done gone struck!"

When the basement had been searched, without further results than this episode, the squad was ordered to the East Room, which was the only one on the first floor that had been opened to the public that day. Jack tested many dark and secluded spots with his walking stick, and while standing at the south end of the room in the act of pushing his cane under a heavy curtain whose folds rested on the floor, President Grant entered, and with an amused expression on his face silently watched the scene. Presently Jack's

cane struck something hidden beneath the curtain which gave forth a sharp metallic sound. He stepped back quickly and the President said, "Don't let it go off before you do," and stepping up he lifted the curtain, and there on the carpet, empty and alone, lay a whisky bottle of the commonest sort. The President looked at it a moment and laughingly said, "Well, the dynamite in that clock seems to have gone off with the anarchist that brought it."

This ended the search at the White House, but the marshal insisted that the man who wrote the letter must be found. Detectives were put on the trail. They discovered that Screvin had taken a cab to the railway station soon after he left the reading-room, having inquired about the train to Baltimore. This was a clue. The detectives obtained a description of the culprit and hastened to Baltimore to find their man. Early in the dawn the keen-eyed sleuths entered the bar of a small hotel near the railway station, stepped quickly up to a man who was putting himself on the outside of three fingers of gin, and tapping him on the shoulder said:

"Screvin, you are wanted in Washington."

"What for?" cried Screvin in surprise.

"You are the author of this anarchistic

letter. That's your writing, is it not?" and the detective showed him the document.

"Yes," said Screvin, "'tis and 'tain't. If you look closely you will find two different handwritings. I wrote 'I, Edwin B. Screvin, do hereby certify that the box containing—' there my handwriting ceases and the forger's begins. I wrote the first part of that letter to certify to a firm in New York that I had deposited a box containing some valuable papers with a Washington trust company; but not satisfied with the wording I threw it aside and some chap, for a practical joke, has done the rest and the Washington police at the same time."

A close examination proved the forgery, and the detectives returned to Washington to run down the forger. He was the brother of the reporter and had left for the far South as soon as he found that his proposed newspaper sensation had assumed such large official proportions.

WHO BROKE THE TIE?

As Jack Stanley grew into young manhood he was often invited to deliver after-dinner talks, five of which are included in this little volume. The following is an extract from a speech delivered in Independence Hall, Philadelphia:

Opportunities come to all men. Some come but once, and if lost are lost forever. Ingalls wrote of opportunity:

"Master of human destiny am I.
Fame, love, and fortune on my foot-steps wait.
Cities and fields I walk. I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and passing by
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate.
If sleeping, wake; if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but they who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to penury, failure and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore.
I answer not, and I return no more."

Opportunities for patriotism are as common as the ebb and flow of the tide, and come to all in various ways; but how many

seize them to the glory of the race and grandeur of their country?

Some people are so nervously constituted that they consider every incident an accident and every accident a calamity. In times of war they pass from camp to camp according to the caprices of victory. The volcanoes of the American Revolution brought many such men to the surface, and some of them were so weak-kneed they remind us of the man who was so knock-kneed that whenever he went for a walk one leg seemed to say to the other, "You please let me pass this time and I'll let you pass the next." But among such men General Joseph Read could not be classed, for when the British Commissioner, Johnstone, offered him fifty thousand dollars and high civil position if he would aid in compelling a speedy submission of the colonies to Great Britain, he spurned the bribe by these immortal words, "I am not worth purchasing; but such as I am the King of England is not rich enough to buy me."

When disaster came with its chilling blasts to Washington, and the friends of yesterday fell fast away from him, Robert Morris, the great financier of the Revolution, stood steadfastly by the heroic commander with his money and his mind. In a moment of great

emergency one of Morris' privateers arrived with ninety tons of lead. Morris gave the lead to Washington in bulk, and Washington gave it promptly to Cornwallis in molded chunks, and Cornwallis returned the compliment by unconditional surrender.

When chicken-hearted men were quailing at the threatening shadows of defeat, the chivalrous Captain Biddle of the ill-starred *Randolph* remained undismayed. While in deadly contact with the British ship *Yarmouth* he was wounded in the thigh, but he kept his place upon the deck amidst the blaze of battle, and as his life-blood was oozing fast away he told his men to stand by their guns, and he issued orders with calmness and decision until his ship was blown to atoms and he and his brave men went down to unknown graves.

When Patrick Henry, standing in the Virginia House of Delegates, surrounded by brave men who wanted to be free, but who could not discern the way, proclaimed in the spell-words of his eloquence, "We are not weak if we but make a proper use of the means which the God of Nature has placed in our power. Three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a land as that which we possess, are in-

vincible to any force our enemy may send against us." When he said that, he awoke the sleeping patriotism of the colonies, and the tide of human events was turned with mighty impetus toward liberty and national progress.

Thomas Jefferson invented the Declaration of Independence and Washington issued the patent by force of arms, and issued it on such broad grounds that no nation can infringe it; but it is not generally known that one man secured its adoption in one of the most dramatic scenes recorded in history.

When the crisis came in the Continental Congress for glory or for shame, for history or for the halter, a man was needed to stand by the honor of Pennsylvania like the rock that stands stirless amid the conflicting agitation of the waves, and that man was found and his name was John Morton, and he hailed from Delaware County. On the Fourth of July in 1776, the day and the hour of the great crisis came. Eleven colonies had already voted for the Declaration of Independence, but Pennsylvania and Delaware came last, and Pennsylvania and Delaware were doubtful. The opposition of a single State at this thrilling moment would have defeated the immortal resolution and changed

the whole trend of this nation's life. Delaware had three delegates and Delaware came first. Thomas McKean, true as the dial to the sun, voted "Aye," but George Read hesitated, and then voted "No," and Cæsar Rodney, the third delegate, was absent. There was a tie and the clerk was about to call the roll for Pennsylvania. At this juncture the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard in front of the state house. Booted, spurred, and breathless, Cæsar Rodney, having ridden eighty miles from the County of Kent through swamp and marsh, rushed into the assembly and voted "Aye" just in time to save little Delaware for the Declaration. Now Pennsylvania was called upon to record her ponderous but uncertain vote. Her delegation consisted of seven members. They were Benjamin Franklin, John Dickinson, John Morton, Robert Morris, James Wilson, Thomas Willing, and Charles Humphries. Dickinson and Morris were not in their official places during roll-call and did not vote. One of the other five was absent, but for what reason no one seemed to know. President Hancock anxiously awaited his coming, but he came not, and delay was no longer possible. Once more the sound of the President's gavel rang through the assembly hall,

and Pennsylvania, the queen of the colonies, was called upon to record her vote.

The muteness of the tomb reigned in Independence Hall and in an instant all eyes were turned toward Pennsylvania's delegation, and the pulsation of anxious hearts could almost be heard in the profound quiet of the place. The roll call began. Franklin voted "Aye." Humphries voted "No." Wilson voted "Aye" and Willing voted "No." There was a tie and for an instant the Declaration of Independence seemed lost. At this decisive moment, a moment, my friends, which may prove to be the mother of Ages of Freedom, John Morton of Delaware County entered this hall. With pallid face, and quivering lips, and clenched hands, he sank nervously into his chair. All the influence of a tory lobby, all the bribes of an intriguing diplomacy, all the ostracizing threats of relatives, friends, and neighbors had been brought to bear upon him to control his vote.

The time had now come to test the courage of this Pennsylvania patriot. The clerk called the name of John Morton. At once he became the focus of all eyes. He arose slowly from his chair. His face was no longer pallid. His lips quivered no more, but his

hand still remained clenched, and with a strong and steady voice he answered, "Aye," and that word confirmed the Declaration of Independence, and kingly tyranny on the Western continent was forever and forever dethroned. From that hour a manifesto went forth to all the world that the Western Hemisphere was dedicated to freedom, to self-government, to the sovereignty of the individual, and equal rights to all who might seek its shores.

To-day that manifesto has been in force for one hundred and thirty years, and to-night we can say without reserve that those thirteen stripes and five-pointed stars have kept their sacred word. And in the keeping of all true Americans that flag still invites the great Republic to a lofty and splendid destiny. In their keeping it will "dissolve the clouds of national danger, warm the frozen limbs of national indifference, and gild every national hope with the pure and genial splendor of its stars." In the beautiful words of Major Scanlon:

"Oh, flag of Light; oh, flag of Hope,
Heaven guide our hearts that we
May guard the sacred heritage
Bequeathed to us in thee.
The faith of old must have inflamed

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Our fathers when they rose,
The Davids of the newer law
Against their vaunting foes.
Yea broke their boasted pride and power,
And, by inspired command,
Proclaimed the gospel and the creed
Of love throughout the land;
Then springing from their grateful breasts,
A soul-embodied prayer,
That flag appeared and threw its light
Across the world's despair,
By godly hands 'twas first unfurled
In dark but godly days,
And godly hands must bear it on
In freedom's godly ways."

WOMAN

AN extract from "A Tribute to Woman,"
delivered by Jack Stanley at a banquet in the
Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia.

In a moment of mental and moral stagnation an old bachelor once said that woman's sphere of usefulness has a well defined limit; but I know that every brave man within the sound of my voice will endorse my words when I say,

There is no thing in earth or heaven,
There is no task to mankind given,
There is no blessing and no woe,
There is no whispered yes or no,
There is no earthly thing on earth
That has a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it.

And if she belongs to that noble group of women whom we call the Daughters of the American Revolution, it makes the element of worth all the more vital because the glow and glory of patriotism so much needed to-day falls like a splendid sheen over all her works.

That good old poet was everlastingly right

when he said, "Woman is the fairest work of the Great Author and no decent man should be without a copy."

He might have added, and the statement would have come within the jurisdiction of reasonable veracity, that if he studies that copy well, and takes it with him wherever he goes, he will avoid many pitfalls in the shape of gold bricks, Chadwicks, and other unpleasant situations.

The truth is, compatriots, when in the long ago some beautiful goddess of the Western world breathed this prayer in the words of the poet:

Bring me men to match my mountains,
Bring me men to match my plains,
Men with Empires in their purpose
And new eras in their brains;
Pioneers to clear thought's marshlands
And to cleanse old error's fens,
Bring me men to match my mountains,
Bring me men.

I say when the beautiful goddess breathed that prayer, she should have caught added inspiration from the god of song and sung:

Bring me queens to match my lilies,
Bring me queens to match my skies,

Queens with love-songs in their bosoms
And with love-light in their eyes;
Queenly forms to cheer life's pathway
And to guide man's faltering soul;
Bring me queens to match my lilies,
Bring me queens with hearts of gold.

For whether that prayer was uttered or
not the queenly American woman came. She
came,

More lovely than a vision brought
From out the fairy realms of thought,
Serene and silent with a grace
Divinely breathed o'er form and face,
In full array of love and light
That dazzled man's adoring sight.

She came, the same kind, civil, obliging,
humane, tender, gay and lovely being we find
her now.

She came, and man was mighty glad to
come with her, and if she should go away
man would tramp the pathless realms of earth
to find her and bring her back.

She came, and when she came the angel
of the world appeared, and a brighter sun-
light fell upon the earth, and a sweeter
fragrance filled the air, and a softer hue
mantled the gentle rose and the modest
hyacinth.

She came, and love and mercy found a
sanctuary in our homes, and any man who

fails to appreciate her coming would find more room for his shriveled soul in a grain of mustard seed than a lonely terrapin would find in the depths of the deep Dead Sea.

She came, and that is why we are here, and that is why we want to stay here, and any man who don't would make an uncommonly sour apple if he had been born in that station in life.

She came, born with a master mind; that is, with a mind to be master if she can, as well as with a mind to be forever young, God bless her, for she was never known to reach the age of forty where the world depended on her for longevity information.

She came to garden the earth with the roses of heaven, and yet that man is a hilarious *non compos mentis* who thinks by force or skill to turn the current of her firm set will; for if she will she will, and if she won't, why a man is simply up against it.

She came to temper our first ancestor Adam, and she came singly, and it is fortunate that she did come singly, for if two had come at the same time there would have been some very warm weather in the Garden of Eden.

She came, and

Each orb a loving anthem sang,
While angel faces wondrous bright
Gazed down from heaven with new delight,
When first our earth a woman trod
Just moulded by the hand of God.

Yes, woman came, and one of the noblest
of them all gave to us that flag which, with
its thirteen stripes and five-pointed stars, has
never known defeat.

Oh, flag of Light; oh, flag of Hope,
Heaven guide our hearts that we
May guard the sacred heritage
Bequeathed to us by thee.

Compatriots, let us arise and drink in silence
to the memory of Betsy Ross, the
"Mother of our Flag."

THE SOVEREIGN SHAD

THE following tribute to "the Sovereign Shad" was delivered at a shad-bake on the banks of the Potomac River:

The origin of the shad dates back several centuries, when, according to an Indian legend, a great medicine-man, angered by something a porcupine did, seized it by the scruff of the neck, turned it outside in, and cast it into a southern estuary, where, luckily for mankind, it has been swimming and spawning, and multiplying to this day. The truth is, when we contemplate this luscious and likely fish it seems as if in the long ago some epicurean goddess of the Western World must have breathed this prayer:

"Bring us shad to fill our rivers,
Bring us shad to feed our brains,
Shads with roe pads in their bosoms,
And fat tissues around their manes."
For that prayer was heard and answered,
And the sons of U. Sam are glad,
Because two gems of this broad river,
Are Marshall Hall and its planked shad.

I say that prayer was answered. The shad

came. They filled our rivers. They sported in the estuaries of the Southland. They fed upon the succulent seaweeds of Albemarle and Pamlico sounds; with flashing fins and waving tails they shot the rapids of the Roanoke, and stemmed the tide of the Great Pee Dee; they wandered up the Chickahominy, and sailed the placid waters of the York, and passing northward, unchecked by the turbulent waves of the Chesapeake, they fattened on the products of the intermediate bays, and finally reached the gentle waters of the Potomac, plump and pinguid, a perfect type of the sovereign shad. A perfect type of the sovereign shad in which we find the silvery glow of the fighting bass, the tender tissues of the royal sheepshead, the succulent flavor of the Spanish mackerel, the graceful form of the land-locked salmon, the sprightly ways of the swift barracuda, and the gentle modesty of the Spanish lady-fish, and to-day the epicurean world is exalted, lifted up as it were, by the lusciousness of this queen of all the queenly fish that grace our southern waters. And every springtime when the shad-bush blossoms, and the shad-frog sings his tender lullabys, the shad-fiend raises his ebenezzer and cries, "Behold the long-looked-for coming shad has arrived and is planked at Marshall Hall."

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So to thee we'll drink, to thee we'll sing;
Our voices silent never,
For thee we'll pray each coming May,
The Potomac shad forever.
For that shad was born in a southern clime,
Which is sweet with the breath of the fragment thyme,
While these men were born by the northern tide,
With an appetite fit for a cannibal's bride;
They met to-day and the shad is inside.

And when you depart to-night and leave the shad bones behind that you have not swallowed, may you feel as the ancient member of the Board of Trade did, who made these shad excursions for thirty years. He attended prayer-meeting some time ago, and during the service the minister said, "Is there any one present who knows of a perfect thing in this imperfect life of ours?" There was an impressive silence for a moment, then the ancient member of the Board of Trade arose and said, "Yes, brother, I know of a perfect thing." And the minister, rubbing his hands in apparent glee, cried out, "Brothers and sisters, here we have a brother who knows of a perfect thing in this imperfect world, perhaps he will tell us what it is." And the old man drawled out, "Yes, I'll tell you what it is, and I don't want you to forget it. It's planked shad at Marshall Hall."

RAISING PIGS IN MARYLAND

THE following is taken from a speech delivered by Jack Stanley at a banquet given to the Maryland Editorial Association in Washington:

I own about seven hundred acres on the Patuxent, in Ann Arundel County. The unfortunate parties who bought the farm with me got cold feet. The result was this property, with all of its responsibilities, fell into my charge with one of those indescribably dull thuds which all experience during the battle of life.

I have been experimenting with that property. I started a pig ranch on it about two years ago, and I did this in spite of my knowledge of the fact that one of John Randolph's friends started a pig ranch down in Charles County, and after two years' experience summed the result up as follows: The negroes raised the corn and fed the corn to the pigs, the pigs ate the corn and the negroes ate the pigs, and left me to pay the taxes.

But I went into the business notwithstanding the experience of John Randolph's friend. I bought up all the pigs for five miles around, sometimes unsight and unseen. As soon as any one heard that I wanted a pig he promptly put a fancy price on him and kindly delivered him at my ranch. One day a wagon loaded with four negroes and one of my unsight and unseen purchases bound up in about two rods of rope arrived on the scene. After the brute had been safely landed in the lot my partner and I took a look at him.

He had all the prominent points of an African hyena, but it turned out that he was only half hyena, and the other half was just razor-back pig, for he had been captured wild in the bottom lands of the Patuxent. He was thinner than a free-trade theory, and he was uglier than the deadest donkey you ever saw. My partner quietly climbed over the fence, into the lot where he was, and said in a soft and gentle voice, "Come, piggie, pig, pig, pig," and the brute came with nose down and back up and mouth wide open. My partner made a double-back handspring, and landed on the other side of the fence. I said to him, "Captain, why in the world did you jump?" and he replied, with considerable agitation, "My dear sir, simply be-

cause I hadn't any wings to soar." We soon turned the brute into our general lot, with fifty fine, sleek, fat pigs. At feeding time he took his place at the head of the long trough, and marched up and down it, a veritable hog of all he surveyed. The fifty fine pigs grew to shadows in less than a month, but the razor-back hyena never gained a single pound except at meal times.

One day my partner said to me, "My dear sir, this will never do. We must bring a prize pig from New York State that will lick the bacon out of that thing and build up our herd." The prize pig was ordered and arrived in the spring. He was a gentlemanly brute, with an aristocratic carriage, and a pedigree as long as the line of office seekers at the White House. He had a retroussé nose, and a real hair-spring curl to his tail. He was as plump as a peach, and was altogether lovely for a pig.

We finally turned him in to mix up in a general way with the group, and soon thereafter my partner left to spend the summer in the north, on Lake Cayuga, and I quietly retired to my farm of rocks and rattle-snakes in Pennsylvania.

In the fall we went down to the ranch together, fairly wriggling with anticipation.

The keeper called in the herd from the bottom land and the first thing that appeared was the hyena of the Patuxent. He trotted into the inclosure as proud and as thin, and as hungry and as ugly as ever, and he promptly took his place at the head of the big feeding trough. Ten other shadows of pigs, all there were left of the fine drove of fifty, came staggering slowly toward the feeding place like a case of tuberculosis on its last legs.

My partner, with a spasm of pain twisting about his mouth, turned to the keeper. "Where is our New York prize pig?" The keeper winced a little and said nervously, "There he is, over there." Gentleman, it was a sight to stop a clock or scare a trolley. There he stood, that once pride and glory of the New York State agricultural fairs; his aristocratic carriage all out of gear. The charming hair-spring curl to his tail had vanished, his beautiful retroussé nose looked like the point of a sixteenth-century shoe, and his plump and pinguid form had dwindled to a bunch of bones, covered with widely scattered hair, and it would have taken two of his kind to make an ordinary shadow. My partner turned in a dazed condition and flung a pathetic glance at me, and commenced talk-

ing like a theatrical manager who was suffering from contracting box receipts.

He said in a languid tone of voice: "My friend, once upon a time a negro caught an immense fish. He fastened it securely to the bank of the river, and hurried off to fetch some friends to see it. While he was gone another fisherman came with a measly little fish, about three inches long, and substituted it for the big one. The negro soon returned with his friends, and full of expectant pride he reached down into the water and pulled up the measly substitute, and holding it aloft with an expression of surprise and amazement he cried, 'Lord a massy, boys, how dat dar fish has shrunk!'"

The next day my partner left for his home in central New York, but before he departed he nailed onto the largest pig pen on the ranch the following placard, "Corn won't grow fast enough for wind-splitters and razor-backs on this ranch. There is no place like home. I have gone north to live with my mother-in-law."

But, gentlemen, I persistently and patiently stayed, and I still own the seven hundred acres in Ann Arundel County, and notwithstanding the fact that the soil is very fair, the only thing I have succeeded in raising

down there is an umbrella and a disturbance with the county commissioners. And that is probably because they have succeeded so well in raising outrageous taxes out of me during the past four years. My friends, I want to say one serious word to you on this point and I am done. Maryland is a great State, and full of promise, and you and I and all interested in that splendid commonwealth are anxious to help make it strong, prosperous, and glorious. And I am personally convinced that one of the quickest ways to accomplish that end is to do away with the system of discrimination in regard to taxation now existing, especially in the agricultural districts of the State.

For instance, I paid four thousand dollars for my seven hundred acres, and I have been assessed seven thousand dollars ever since, which is 40 per cent. more than it cost and sixty per cent. more than it is worth. I bought at public sale the adjoining farm of four hundred acres for one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars, and I sold it for the same sum to a well-known fruit-grower, whom I desired to interest in experimenting and in helping to develop the fruit-growing interests of the State. And he has been assessed three thousand nine hundred dol-

lars ever since, which is more than three times what it cost him. We are both new comers and strangers in Maryland. Now here is the difference: Adjoining our farms is a tract containing one hundred acres, just as good land as ours, which was sold at public sale to a native of Maryland for one hundred dollars, and he has been assessed for only one hundred dollars ever since, or eight hundred per cent. less an acre than my land is assessed. Now we have appealed time and again to the county commissioners for justice and redress, but we never have received even so much as the courtesy of a reply.

If you should ask me why they don't reply, I would simply say that I can't answer that question any more than the little boy who stuttered could answer the question of the stranger who met him on the public highway and asked him how far it was up to Jones's. The little boy said: "M-m-m-mister, it's a-a-a-a-bout f-f-f-f-five—— D-d-darn it, go o-on, for you'll get there before I can tell you."

Maryland is a great State, and with fair treatment capital and industry will come into it and help develop its splendid agricultural resources and place it where it rightfully belongs among the mighty commonwealths of

the Republic. And I earnestly urge you to fight persistently and bravely for an honest and fair adjustment of this unfortunate condition of things in regard to taxation, and thus help us and help all who desire to make the beautiful State of Maryland a strong, a prosperous, a happy, and a glorious commonwealth. And if you do not succeed in reforming your commissioners at first remember the prayer of the little girl whose mother told her to always ask the Lord to try and make her a good little girl, and when she prayed she said, "Good Lord, bless dear papa and dear mamma and try to make me a good little girl, and if at first you don't succeed try, try again."

THE SPIRIT OF A NATION'S SONG

AT a Pennsylvania Society banquet held in the Hotel Waldorf Astoria, in answer to the toast, "The Spirit of a Nation's Song," Jack said:

Very appropriately there has been placed upon this beautiful program the first stanza of the great song which glorifies that flag which a Pennsylvania woman, by an inspiration of almost miraculous power, made and gave to this nation as an ensign for the State where man is Law and Law is King, and God alone is great.

And to-day, after one hundred and thirty years, the Northern stars and the Southern stars, and the stars of the East and the West, lie side by side, in peace and pride, on that fair flag's mother breast, and yet I firmly believe that within the confines of this banquet hall there are not two Americans in one hundred who know the words of the great song that glorifies that flag, and if they do the probabilities are they can not sing them. And this belief harmonizes perfectly with the following experience:

Some time ago, while crossing the Atlantic Ocean coming westward, a grand entertainment was given in the dining-saloon of the steamer, and during the entertainment some patriot suggested we sing "The Star Spangled Banner." It was tried, but it was a complete and dismal failure. The only person present who seemed to know all the words of the song was the daughter of a naturalized American who had married an Englishman, and, unfortunately, she belonged to that class who always keep quiet during thunderstorms, because of their metallic voices, and of course she did not sing long. Finally her husband, to relieve the embarrassment, arose and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen: America is the child of England, and England is proud of her offspring. Now, it is apparent that you can not sing the song of the child, therefore let us sing the song of the mother; let us sing 'God Save the King.'" And there, on that American ship, built by American labor, flying the American flag and thronged with American citizens, "God Save the King" was sung to perfection, while, only a few moments before, an effort to sing "The Star Spangled Banner," that song which glorifies the fairest and the fastest flag that floats, was a complete and humiliating failure.

Well, to express it moderately, many of us found as little comfort in that incident as I did several years ago, when the chairman of your Committee of Arrangements annihilated a normal Republican majority of 5,000 in eastern Pennsylvania, and became the youngest and one of the most popular Democratic members of the House. At that time some of my over-enthusiastic friends thought I ought to stand for Congress as a Republican in the same district. One day an old gentleman who knew a great deal more about political wire-pulling than he did about the use and application of words, came to me and said, "Now the boys want you to run to Congress and you ought to run." I said, "My dear sir, I have no ability or qualifications for Congress and I don't want to run." "Oh," said he, "ability and qualifications ain't got nothing to do with it. We often send very ordinary and common men to Congress, and now is just as good a time for you to run as any."

Under the spell of that pitiful ocean incident I some time later entered a great congress of patriots, held in one of the New England States, and offered the following resolution for consideration:

"Whereas, as less than two per cent. of

the American people know the words of their National anthem,

"Therefore be it Resolved, That this Society, in congress assembled, earnestly request that at least one stanza of that song be sung by all of our local and State societies at the opening of all their meetings."

As soon as the resolution was read, a half dozen patriots sprang to their feet protesting that it would be a positive disgrace for the largest organized body of patriots in the United States to sanction a resolution telling the whole world that less than two per cent. of the American people know the words of their own National song. Well, any blind man could see that a robust danger stood knocking at the door of the author of that resolution, but finally he secured recognition and said:

"Gentlemen, sixty per cent. of the men and women of England can sing, 'God Save the King,' a large majority of the German people have learned to sing 'Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein, fest steht und treu die Wacht-am-Rhein.' And a great majority of the French people can voice in ringing notes their 'Marseillaise,' 'Allons, enfants de la patrie, le jour de gloire est arrivé. Aux armes citoyens, formez vos bataillons, Mar-

chons, Marchons.' Nearly all of the little brown soldiers of Japan, who, with monster heroism, stormed the bloody angles on Dragon Hill, chanted with enthusiasm their national anthem :

“ ‘ May Our Lord's dominion last,
Till a thousand years have passed ;
Twice four thousand times o'er told,
Firm as rock of earth, deep-rooted,
Moss of ages uncomputed
Grow upon it green and old.' ”

“ But,” continued the author of the resolution, “ I will wager a very large congressional appropriation if you will get it passed, that not two Americans in one hundred know the words of their own National anthem, and if they do, the probabilities are they can not sing them.”

Well, of course, this outburst brought another tidal wave of trouble to the author of the resolution. Immediately a dozen men sprang to their feet, and a delegate from Connecticut, where the stone fences do not turn out for anything but schoolhouses, insisted that the people of New England had learned that song in the public schools, and nearly all could sing it. In reply to this the author said, “ Gentlemen, with all due respect for this august body of patriots, I will

give one hundred dollars to the National Fund of this Society if two per cent. of the New England delegation know the words of and can sing 'The Star Spangled Banner.' " Instantly a score of New Englanders rose to their feet for the purpose of protesting, but the presiding officer, in order to quiet matters, requested that the resolution be withdrawn and presented in a more acceptable form the next morning. This was agreed to, and the patriots, apparently relieved, proceeded with the regular order of business, but evidently they felt something as the father did who received the following telegram from his boy in college:

"Dear Father: I have just had my freshman examinations, and the professors are so delighted they want me to try again."

Now the most uncomfortable feature of the incident, I am sorry to say, was the fact that the author of the resolution did not know the words of the song himself, which he discovered, to his utter amazement, when he tried to repeat them to himself, and if some clever delegate had risen in that Congress and asked him to repeat the first stanza of the song he would have felt as embarrassed as the man did who went into a restaurant one day and sat down at a table and found a

plate of honey there and ate it and went home.

Some time afterward he took his wife to this same restaurant and sat down at the same table, but there was no honey there. Presently the colored waiter came to take the order, and the man said, "John, where is my honey?" and John paralyzed him with this reply, "She don't work here no mo', boss; she's done got a job in de silk mill."

Conscious that he had placed himself in jeopardy before that great congress, the author started out early next morning to buy the song and practice what he was preaching by learning the words. The first book store he entered the clerk smiled and said, "We had a great run on 'Star Spangled Banner' songs last night, and sold out." He turned to go, when the clerk stopped him, saying, "Perhaps we may find it in a collection of college songs we have." And the collection of college songs was examined, but the words of our National anthem were not there. Shades of Washington, and Greene, and Lee, and Marion, and all of that band of heroes who helped to make the flag that song glorifies a possibility; and shades of Lincoln, and Grant, and Sheridan, and Sherman, and Meade, and all of that grand army which

preserved to us an "unbroken brotherhood from sea to sea," in a collection of college songs, found within the shadows of one of the greatest institutions of learning in this country, which is sending thousands of young men into the active life of this nation to help make and administer our laws, the words of our National anthem could not be found!

Think of it! Disturbed and chagrined, the author turned to go, when the clerk stopped him again, saying, "Perhaps we may find it in a collection of Miscellaneous Songs we have just received," and this collection was examined, and there, near the front page, as bold as triumph, was "God Save the King." Then came those two ringing songs of the Southland, "Maryland, my Maryland," and "Dixie." Then "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," and "The Girl I left Behind Me," and "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night," and "Who'll Care for Mother Now," and "Everybody Works but Father," and "Bedelia." And finally, away in the back part of the book, in rather small type, was found the glorious anthem that sprang to life amid the weird cries of the stormy petrel of human strife to glorify that flag whose influence to-

day is so earth-wide that whenever the President of the United States voices, through his great Secretary of State, sentiments in favor of international rights, his words are listened to with profound respect and attention in the council chambers of the world. The author of the resolution bought the book, he committed the song to memory, and he entered that great congress with these words upon his lips:

"Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last
gleaming."

And as he sat down, to his utter surprise, the entire audience arose and sang the first verse of "The Star Spangled Banner," and sang it well.

As soon as the singing ceased, a delegate from Boston said, "Now that we have demonstrated we can sing 'The Star Spangled Banner,' it is time for the gentleman from Pennsylvania to pay his one hundred dollars into the fund of this Society." Here was a moment that was not the happiest of the author's life, and at first he found as little comfort in the situation as the teacher did who sent a small boy home from school one day with a card upon which was written, "Your

boy talks too much," and when his father read it he smiled and sent the card back to the teacher with these words upon it, "Great Cæsar, you should hear his mother." Finally the author found himself and said, "Gentlemen, the reported run on the book stores last night is true. You have sung the first stanza of the song out of the books you have purchased, and have sung it well. My proposition was that if two per cent. of the New England delegation know the words of, and can sing 'The Star Spangled Banner,' I would give one hundred dollars to the fund of this Society. Now, if you will close the books and sing the second stanza I'll double the gift." But they did not try; they knew better, for, in that aggregation of five hundred patriots, there were not ten persons who knew the words of their National song, and in order to relieve the embarrassment, the original resolution, modified to meet the demands of New England pride, was offered and adopted with the compliment of a rising vote.

But, gentlemen, that concession to New England pride did not change one iota the deplorable fact that less than two per cent. of the American people know the words of their National hymn.

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In conclusion, permit me to say, that song sings of

Your flag and my flag, and oh how much it holds,
Your land and my land secure within its folds;
Your hearts and my heart beat quicker at the sight,
Sun-kissed and wind-tossed, the red, the blue and the
white,
The one flag, the great flag, the flag for me and you,
Pennsylvania's birthright pride, the red, the white, the
blue.

And you who are proud that our great State has given it birth, if you knew the magic of any given form of speech or action that would place the song that glorifies that flag in the hearts of our people, the patriotic spirit that would spring from that act would mean more to this country in times of need than battalions and armed battlements, and mighty ships of war. For at the sound of the bugle call it would give to this nation an army of patriots mightier than Rome was able to summon behind her golden eagles, and that spirit would baffle every foe, at home and abroad, and invite the great Republic to a lofty and splendid destiny.

JACK BREAKS INTO THE CONSULAR SERVICE

ONE night Jack attended a meeting at which an address upon consular reform was delivered and he was deeply impressed. The speaker said in part:

"I hold that the day for commercial optimism in this country has passed away and the hour for commercial opportunism has come. Up to now our export system has been in the kindergarten class compared to those of Germany and England. Our exporters have simply supplied the voluntary demands. In the near future they will be struggling anxiously for foreign markets in order to rid themselves of a troublesome surplus, and they must succeed if American labor is to be employed at fair wages.

"The Government will dig the Panama Canal, but the Government is not itself an exporter, and when the canal is in operation you will find the finished products of the Orient floating more easily and freely this way than the finished products of the Occident will float toward the Japan Sea. You will find many things coming our way natu-

rally, and without the least exertion on our part, but you will not find many things going the other way unless we push them.

"To do this the American consular corps must be deployed along the commercial picket lines of the world's trade, under a control and discipline as rigid as that of the army and navy. This being the case the question arises, 'How can we improve the consular service to meet this task?' And right here permit me to say that the subject is too important, the needed reforms too varied and pressing, and the best means to obtain all of the ends are still too undetermined to be explained in the time limit of this address; and yet in the presence of this intelligent audience I am willing to say that if Congress will do four things and do them thoroughly, the American consular service will soon become the best in the world, and these four things are as follows:

"*First.* A proper classification of all of the positions, a thing which has never been done. Then readjust and pay reasonable salaries to all of the incumbents and place the entire service under a rigid inspection by able, energetic, and impartial consuls-general. Congress must arrange for this.

"*Second.* Cover all fees, official and un-

official, into the Treasury of the United States, every dollar of them. Congress must legislate for this.

"*Third.* Construct and pass a law that no man holding an American consular commission, who does his duty, can be catapulted out of the service like a tramp, without warning and without cause, upon the political change of an administration; and for that matter, at any other time. Congress can prevent this.

"*Fourth.* Beneath every American consular shield place a worthy and representative American citizen to care for the interests of the American people. Congress must help to do this.

"And if Congress will do these four things the patriotic Chief Magistrate of this nation and his great Secretary of State will certainly do the rest and do it well. If Congress will make those four propositions operative the commercial interests of this country will realize what they have long and earnestly sought, a perfectly organized, well disciplined and efficient consular corps.

"And right here permit me to state that when these things obtain:

"The invalid in search of a benign climate near some comfortable sanitarium;

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"The man who has special business interests in the consular district to which he wishes to be assigned;

"The specialist who wants to make a special study in conjunction with consular work;

"The man who feels that he has rendered sufficient political services at home to make him immune from any exertion abroad;

"The man who wants to go to Europe to obtain a social standing which he cannot get at home;

"The retired tired business or professional man who desires to go abroad at government expense for travel or for rest;

"The American father who wants to go to Europe at government expense in order to give his American children a foreign education;

"And above all, the citizen of a foreign power who wants to hang the American consular shield and flag above his shop for what 'there is in it,' need no longer apply for positions in the American consular service, for the Government, aroused to the importance of its task, will, under this new order of things, bar all cheap, impractical, alien, and useless material from the American consular corps.

"Practical work, intelligent and well-directed industry, patriotic impulse, and clean personal and official records are what the service needs. To get these things the Government must pay for them, and to pay for them right, the Congress of the United States must give fair salaries to representative American citizens for honest consular work.

"The next step," said the speaker, "is the complete abolition of the present pernicious unofficial fee system. It is one of the most formidable barriers that now confronts an improvement of the service. It tempts to the falsification of returns. It leads to extortion. It makes easy the invasion of a colleague's territory. It creates friction among consuls. It sometimes wrongs the American citizen. It often burdens the foreign subject, and it has been, and always and forever will be if maintained, a fertile mother of graft. Every dollar collected by the unofficial fee system should be covered into the Treasury of the United States, just as every official fee is supposed to be, and any failure to make full and honest returns should be followed by swift recall and quick dismissal. Then—and this, after careful consideration of the subject, I feel is a very important thing

—remove all subjects of foreign powers now holding American consular commissions. I mean the five hundred and sixty odd citizens of foreign powers who now occupy our vice-consulships, consular agencies, and clerkships to consuls, and who are a constant and increasing irritation to foreign shippers, as well as positive barriers to the expansion of American trade, for while we must have a foreign service, there is no valid reason why we should have a sub-service of foreigners. Americanize the American Consular service and keep it American. Remove these gentlemen courteously, on the ground of public policy, and fill their places with worthy and capable young Americans, not upon a fee income system such as now exists, but upon a salary basis and make these places training schools from which the capables may be advanced to higher grades in the service and the incapables recalled and dismissed.

“And when these men, and all other men of the American consular corps, do their whole duty, throw the protecting shield of a reasonable tenure of office about them so that the hungry political axmen cannot, without warning and without cause, strike their unjust and hurtful blows.

“I know there are some patriotic public

men who fear that the application of the civil service law to the consular service might create dry rot in the consular corps, but under the present system we find evidences of dry rot. For instance, a consular agent in writing about his office, said:

“‘My office as consular agent and my private pursuit as hotel keeper combined has always been a puzzle to the queer notions on man’s dignity in this aristocratic East, and I cannot tell if they understand me when I explain them.

“‘Though distinct as to their duties, the Consul and the Landlord are one in person and heart and guided by one motto applicable as well to an Office-room as to a Kitchen:

“‘Biblical simplicity and Evangelical cleanliness.’

“Another wrote: ‘Social condition—Low, owing to the poorness condition of the majority; number of american citizens reside in this City—none, general cost of leaving expensive. Only one public hotel at this city.’

“Another said: ‘I give informs often to those american manufacturers that are in the possibility to sell their goods in this town.’

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"Another writes: 'This town has a great number of villages and detached dwellings engaged in agricultural pursuits and employed on sugar estates.'

"From Canada came this screed: 'My vice-consul is a practical farmer, a hotel man, a marine engineer, and a Niagara river pilot.'

"One wrote a letter to his sweetheart in which he tells her that he loves her with his whole heart and he spells it, 'hole harte.' You hear of another full consul—I do not mean a consul that is full, but a principal officer—who rises uninvited at a Fourth of July banquet, which was attended by over two hundred distinguished Americans and foreigners, and you hear him say, 'Come, boys, let us rise our glasses to the ladies and upon this anniversary of our nation's birth let us drink to the health of George Washington, who was the fundament of his country.'

"From these examples you will see that some dry rot prevails under the present system of breaking into the consular service through political pulls.

"Now if the Congress will classify all positions, readjust salaries, cover all fees into the Treasury, give a reasonable tenure of office, and put none but representative Ameri-

can citizens on guard, a simple, easy, and practical reform of the consular service will have been accomplished.

"If a memorial along these lines were presented to Congress by the great trade organizations it would instantly attract the attention of that great body of men, who stand to-day pre-eminent among the law-makers of the earth and who are always ready to do anything that is practical and helpful for the expansion of American commerce on all sides of the seas. And if they should consider such a memorial favorably the commercial interests of this nation would have a well-trained army of commercial soldiers to help fight and win the battles that must be fought and won by the survival of the fittest in the irrepressible contest for the over-sea trade."

For some time Jack Stanley had longed to become a member of that ever increasing throng who yearn to break into the consular service. This speech served to whet that desire, but, notwithstanding his wide acquaintance with politicians he found the undertaking bristling with difficulties. He found that the age of a woman is not more doubtful than a dead sure thing in a struggle for consular appointment. He found too much "by-

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and-by " and too little "now-now " realized from political promises. He found that endorsements on applications and letters of recommendation are as helpless as the seventh commandment in a den of thieves, unless they are supported by the personal efforts of the men who sign them, and that most of these men must be in position, politically, to give something in return. He also found that the most important step is to discover a vacancy, or a prospective one, get the appointing power to agree to appoint, and then sit tight and hope.

Jack decided to enter the service if possible. He had heard that it was the lack of push that keeps a man back, but in seeking a public position he discovered that the necessary requisites are political pulls and power to pull them. During his journalistic career he had won favor with several political leaders, and one day he took the ablest of his pulls over to the Department of State to find out from the chief of the Consular Bureau how he could most expeditiously get into the foreign service. Some one was ahead of them, as is usually the case at this mecca of applicants. It was an American business man who had a friend he was urging for appointment to a certain position in a land of

one of the dead languages, because of the peculiar unfitness of the incumbent. This consul had gone abroad at government expense to make a special archeological study in connection with consular work, and the merchant having business at the consulate called to transact it, and was giving the chief of the Consular Bureau his experience. Said he:

"One day I went to the consulate to get some invoice forms. The memoranda of the archeological book had crowded the blanks to the floor, and taken possession of the table and desk and several of the chairs. The consul got down on his knees and crawled among the scattered invoice forms of various kinds, some for 'purchasers,' some for 'consignors,' and some for 'personal effects,' and after rummaging about a long time, he stood erect and said, 'Call again; things are so mixed up I can't find the blankety blanks you want.' His memoranda was well assorted and carefully arranged, but the invoice forms—well, what does such a small matter as invoice forms have to do with an American consulate any way?"

As Jack's Political Pull was on the point of disclosing to the chief the object of his call, a gentleman with an oriental cast of

vision, and an occidental cast of cheek, pushed in between them and said:

"Vell, mister Shief, how about dot fancancy in Shermamy. Dot would fit me yust like noddings."

"I am sorry, Mr. Jacobson," said the chief, "but the President appointed Mr. Smith Jones to that place yesterday."

"Vat," cried Mr. Jacobson, "Vat! Smith Shones abbointed to Shermamy? Gott in himmel, vat is dot Smith Shones going to do in Shermamy, he's no Sherman. Dot Mr. Bresident makes von grad pig plunder ven he sends dose Shones to Shermamy." And picking up his hat he walked out in high dudgeon.

Jack's Political Pull, finding an opportunity, made a frank appeal to the chief for information as to the swiftest way of hurrying Jack into the service. The chief wrinkled one of those frozen diplomatic smiles for which he is famous, and observed that the Secretary of State might know. They went to see that great man. Others were ahead of them, and all wanted to go abroad at Government expense. While waiting a card was brought to the Secretary by the head messenger, who was flashing a merry twinkle from his eyes. It was the card of

one of the greatest statesmen and most persistent bores in public life. As soon as the Secretary saw the card his face became solemn. He arose quickly, and stepping hurriedly to the hat rack, put on his cylinder, buttoned up his Prince Albert, and started for the door, reaching it just as the distinguished bore entered.

"Oh, I see you are going out, Mr. Secretary," said the statesman.

"Yes," replied the Secretary, "I have an important engagement and must keep it. I will see you later." And walking out through the corridor, he descended the stairs, passed through another corridor slowly, to give the eminent bore time to depart, then up stairs he went and back to his office, doffed his hat, sat down at his desk, and took up the thread of conversation where it had been broken off, as calmly as though nothing had happened.

Whenever this Secretary of State was through with a visitor he had a peculiar way of rising from his seat which seemed to lift everybody about him to an erect posture. As soon as he was ready to dismiss the parties to whom he was giving audience he arose and they all stood as though they were connected to him by some unseen tie. When

they were gone the Secretary turned to Jack's Political Pull and inquired what he could do for him.

"To be frank with you, Mr. Secretary," said the Political Pull, "I have a young man here who would fit into a consular vacancy without a particle of alteration, and if there is no vacancy you might suggest how one could be created."

The Secretary said he had learned from experience that consular vacancies were created in two ways—by death and at the White House, but seldom by voluntary resignation, and that, on the subject of appointments, the President was the sole authority. Saying this he arose in his accustomed way, a way that brought the Political Pull and Jack to an upright, and informed them by a simple glance that he was willing to let them go.

The next step was in the direction of that great white building where so many hopes are realized or blighted. Jack accompanied his Political Pull to the Executive Office. There they found the Chief Magistrate surrounded by a group of placemen from a Western State, who were trying to make or fill a vacancy. As they passed into the reception room they paused in a far corner, and

while waiting for an audience, their ears caught the following:

"Gentlemen," said the President to the delegation, "your candidate for consular honors may be all you say, but I have found that while exaggeration belongs to fishermen, it very often affiliates with men who endorse candidates for office. I desire to send good men abroad, but as I cannot know all of them personally I depend upon the assurances of their supporters, and this has led me into some deplorable selections. A member of this delegation once recommended a young man very highly to me, and I sent him abroad, but the government to which he was accredited refused him an exequatur on the ground that he was an embezzler."

At this moment a distinguished statesman entered and the President said, "Here comes another political leader from your commonwealth who urged the appointment of a constituent, with the solemn assurance that he was only a little below the angel class, but the government to which he was assigned refused to receive him because he had swindled one of its citizens during a great exposition in this country." At this the distinguished newcomer turned to the Chief Magistrate and laconically said:

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"Well, Mr. President, the candidate of my colleague was a little worse than mine, wasn't he?"

"I don't think," said the President, "there was much difference between them, and I desire to emphasize the fact that this reckless way of recommending persons for places of public trust is the bane of the appointing power and the most persistent evil with which it has to contend."

"But, Mr. President," said the Political Angel of the candidate, "our man is A No. 1, pure gold, 24 carats fine, and just the person you need in the consular business."

The President: "Is he a gentleman?"

Political Angel: "Mr. President, he will never be put to the trouble of trying to be a gentleman, the Lord did that job for him. I never associated with a more perfect one. He is noted for it in my section. He is very strict on this point. I have seen him get up and beg his own pardon after falling down. He is politeness in the concrete, so to speak."

The President: "Has he had any religious training?"

Political Angel: "He has. He absorbed religion at his mother's breast. He can quote Scriptures like a deacon, and doesn't confine himself to 'Now I lay me down to

sleep' in times of supplication. He's a paragon in moral philosophy and an expert in practical Christianity."

The President: "The length of a man's prayers are not always a safe test of his real life. How are his morals?"

Political Angel: "Morals, Mr. President, are among his conspicuous virtues. He can nip sin in the bud with remarkable ease. He never trifles with the mercy of God, and would not trample on the principles of salvation if he could avoid it. It is as natural for him to be moral as it is for a cat to have twins. He never has to put himself out to be good. It is as easy for him as it is for some men to complicate things like ten in a bed."

The President: "Is he industrious?"

Political Angel: "I am glad you asked me that, Mr. President. Industry is his badge of honor. He will work sixteen hours on a holiday and insist it is pleasant pastime. An increase of office hours always decorates his face with smiles. He would leave a sofa in a back parlor with his best girl on it to tackle a hard job. He always hustled for business and worked it with both hands. That's the do-things he is, and he never seems to tire."

The President: "Is he capable?"

Political Angel: "I think he is capable of doing almost anything. He will seize hold of the first thing that turns up, and turn up the next thing if he wants it. He believes that God helps him who helps himself to what he needs. He is strong on this point and never misses an opportunity."

The President: "Has he ever studied law?"

Political Angel: "Yes, Mr. President, he is an attorney-at-law; has also been a coroner, and can sit on a trial or an inquest with equal facility. He has also studied dentistry and can draw a molar as well as a deed, and has a smattering of Christian Science."

The President: "Does he drink, smoke, or chew?"

Political Angel: "It is fortunate that you asked that question, for it gives a chance to voice one of his prime virtues. He organized the first 'Anti-Chew and Smoke Club' in my section, and I never knew him to have anything stronger than a buttermilk-breath in my life."

The President: "Does he swear?"

Political Angel: "Never heard him say anything worse than 'Götterdämmerung' and 'Godfrey's cordial.' The truth is, Mr.

President, he is so sensitive on the subject of profanity that they have to affirm him in court."

The President: "You seem to have an ideal candidate; none of the vices and nearly all of the virtues, something rarely found in those seeking public office. By the way, Judge, how long have you known this man?"

The Political Angel hesitated, and the unexpected happened. In this moment of hesitation, a member of the delegation naïvely broke the silence with, "Why, Mr. President, I introduced him to the Judge in the waiting-room just before we entered."

The President gave the Judge a look that would have withered a man with a conscience, and said:

"I thought as much. File the papers of your ideal young man in the Department of State, Judge, and when you get on speaking terms advise him that any business bird he may have in hand is better than a flyer in the consular bush and he should hold it tight, for he stands about as much chance of filling a consular vacancy as he does of going abroad by pontoon or tunnel.

The audience was over. The Political Angel with his protégé and friends walked out with smiles as though they were suffering.

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The President did not say, "What's your hurry," he let them go, and, turning to Jack's Political Pull, greeted him with a cordial hand grasp and said, "What can I do for you?"

Political Pull: "Mr. President, the Secretary of State informs me that all vacancies in the consular service are created by death or the Presidential ax, and here is a candidate who would like to occupy a creation."

The President: "Did you hear what the Judge said about his candidate? How does your man measure up to that description?"

Political Pull: "I don't think he is as much of an all-around angel. He certainly would not break into a church with 'No admission,' posted on the front door, or struggle to get into heaven before the Lord sent for him."

The President: "I take it for granted that this young man is a gentleman."

Political Pull: "Well, Mr. President, he may lack the superficial polish of Europe, but he has more natural humanity. He does not belong to that class of young bloods who bleed the old man, and he doesn't haunt the church and theater fronts to ogle the girls and make remarks. He never wears his

trousers rolled up on dry days, nor does he stay longer than business requires at an interview. He does know when to use a toothpick, and how to sit on a chair in the presence of ladies, and also the right time to break in on a general conversation."

The President: "That is encouraging. How are his morals?"

Political Pull: "Well, Mr. President, I've never seen him try to do the sacred person act. He isn't perfect, we have a few in our town who think they are, but they don't get on extra well. This young man is rather natural in his morals. He tempers his holy zeal with a little holy common sense. If any one treads on his toes intentionally and he knows it, he will raise a hot disturbance, but I think he would do the square thing in a meeting-house, and I am sure he doesn't feel that he could write a better book than the Bible."

The President: "That is reassuring. Is he industrious?"

Political Pull: "I don't know just how to answer that. I've heard him say he could do everything but 'saw wood and work,' yet I've known him to get up before daylight with the thermometer below zero and build the kitchen fire, put the kettle on, and arrange

everything for breakfast, before he would wake his good old mother."

The President: "Any young man of ability, who is kind to his mother, will make good wherever you put him. Has your candidate ability?"

Political Pull: "I never saw him eat enough for three and look wiser than the whole Carnegie Institute, but I think he has a saving amount of ability and sense. I have seen him, while freshman at college, submit to the usual restrictions of the upper classmen, but when it came to a rush he went through a solid phalanx of sophomores like a telegram. He is a success on a football team and a mighty stepper in a cross-country run, and can split the wind in a hundred-yard dash that beats the best."

The President (interested): "He seems to be quite a boy. Does he drink, smoke, or chew?"

Political Pull: "He always rides in the smoking-car, not because it is the only place disinfected on the train, but because he wants to smoke. As for drinking, I would say that cocktails don't ooze out of his skin on warm days, and yet he can drink a glass with a big stick in it, when thirsty, but he does it with discretion."

The President: "Does he swear?"

Political Pull: "I think he has one of the choicest vocabularies in that line I ever heard, but he shows real genius in selecting the time and place. I am satisfied that he could, if occasion called for it, swear at an 'invoice-as-you-please' shipper in three different languages, and on a pinch make himself understood in four; but he would use judgment, for he knows that the time to strike the iron is when it can be hit."

The President: "Has he had any experience in trade and commerce?"

Political Pull: "I think he has some ability in that line. It's in the blood. His father started out with a small grocery in my town and in less than ten years he had one on nearly every main street corner in the county. The boy inherited a talent for trade. If, in his early days, he tackled a group of boys loaded with jack knives, marbles, and tops, you would find the choicest assortment in his pocket in the evening."

The President: "He seems to be a likely lad. By the way, how long have you known him?"

Political Pull: "Why, Mr. President, I heard him split the air with his first yell. I was the family doctor."

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The President: "Good. My O. K. will go on his application paper for the first vacancy and my initials will go under the O. K., and that counts at the Department of State. While your candidate may not be a paragon of goodness, I will know what I am getting if I appoint him, and that rarely happens when I depend on the average politician for truth about candidates."

Jack walked out of the White House as brave as a victory. Within three weeks he received his commission as consul at a trade center in Germany, took the oath of office, was allowed thirty days for instructions with pay, at the end of which time he was on board a fast steamer bound for the Old World, where his busy life for eleven years was full of fun and pathos.



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